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# CollectivED

**Working papers from CollectivED;  
The Hub for Mentoring and  
Coaching**

**A Research and Practice Centre at  
Carnegie School of Education**

**Issue 5  
September 2018**

# CONTENTS PAGE

<b>Editorial: Welcome to CollectivEd Issue 5 and CollectivED News.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Mentoring: Managed by Myth.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<i>A Research and Practice Insight Working Paper by J.K. Alexander</i>	
<b>Working together: Coaching as the compass in the journey of implementation.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<i>A Practice Insight Working Paper by Kelly Ashley and North Star TSA</i>	
<b>The Impact of Government Reform on the Conceptualisations of Professionalism in Compulsory Education in England.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<i>A Research Working Paper by Nicola Crossley</i>	
<b>Coaching, Leadership and Footy .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<i>A Thinkpiece Working Paper by Andrew Mears</i>	
<b>Mentoring as part of the foundation for career long professional development and learning.....</b>	<b>28</b>
<i>A Research Insight Working Paper by Rachel Lofthouse</i>	
<b>Coaching: A young person's perspective.....</b>	<b>37</b>
<i>A Thinkpiece Working Paper by Chris Reddy</i>	
<b>Mentoring in sports coaching: A reciprocal learning endeavour.....</b>	<b>41</b>
<i>A Research Working Paper by Tom Leeder and Darren Moss</i>	
<b>The Women Leading in Education coaching pledge.....</b>	<b>47</b>
<i>A Thinkpiece Working Paper by Carly Waterman</i>	
<b>Teacher Rounds – an alternative form of professional learning. ....</b>	<b>50</b>
<i>A Research and Practice Insight Working Paper by Kenny Frederick and Clare Benton</i>	
<b>The National Coaching Symposium 2018: Informing my decision to utilise coaching and mentoring techniques to enhance the research and enquiry being conducted by teachers.....</b>	<b>56</b>
<i>A Thinkpiece Working Paper by Steven Riley</i>	
<b>Process Supervision with Senior Leaders in Schools .....</b>	<b>63</b>
<i>A Practice Insight Working Paper by Lisa Lea-Weston</i>	
<b>Professional Communities Among Teachers: A Summary of a Conceptual Framework.....</b>	<b>68</b>
<i>A Practice Working Paper by James Underwood and Marta Kowalczyk-Wałędziak</i>	
<b>BELMAS Conference 2018 – the links to coaching and mentoring in educational leadership .....</b>	<b>72</b>
<i>A Thinkpiece Working Paper by Deborah Outhwaite</i>	
<b>Time for a PIT stop: supporting teachers' reflection-in-action .....</b>	<b>75</b>
<i>A Practice Insight Working Paper by Russell Grigg and Helen Lewis</i>	
<b>Book Review of Campbell, J. &amp; van Nieuwerburgh C. (2017) The Leader's Guide to Coaching in Schools By Mark Liddell .....</b>	<b>81</b>
<b>CollectivEd Thinking Out Loud: An interview with Sarah Jones.....</b>	<b>83</b>
<b>Information on our contributors .....</b>	<b>86</b>

# Editorial: Welcome to CollectivED Issue 5

CollectivEd: The Hub for Mentoring and Coaching is a Research and Practice Centre based in the Carnegie School of Education at Leeds Beckett University. In less than 12 months since we founded the Centre we have made developed our networks, practice and research. Our aim is to support professionals and researchers in a shared endeavour of enabling professional practice and learning which has integrity and the potential to be transformative. We are interested in all voices, we will learn from many experiences and will engage with and undertake research.

Welcome to our fifth issue of CollectivEd Working Papers. Once again it has been an absolute pleasure to collate these papers. They represent the lived experiences of researchers and practitioners working to support the professional learning and practice development of teachers and other education staff at all stages of their career. Please do read them and use them to provoke your own reflections and action. Information about the contributors is provided at the end of this issue, along with an invitation to contribute.

Our first working paper is by **J.K. Alexander** who explores the concept of mentoring, and links this to an analysis of power. This paper draws powerfully on both her reflection on experience of mentoring an ITE student and her critical engagement with the literature.

Our second paper is written by **Kelly Ashley** who draws on her experiences of supporting a SSIF project to consider how coaching can be integrated as a core implementation strategy to drive improvement, build capacity and sustain change over time.

The third paper is based on **Nicola Crossley's** recently awarded doctorate. In this paper Nicola uses critical discourse analysis to consider the impact of government reform on the conceptualisations of headteachers' and teachers' professionalism.

In fourth working paper **Andrew Mears** asks whether we have created school cultures in which results matter and the people do not, by reflecting on the managerial approach Gareth Southgate. You do not have to be a football fan to find his discussion fascinating.

In our fifth paper **Rachel Lofthouse** draws on small-scale survey data and a research-informed conceptual model to consider dimensions of mentoring which may support it in forming a foundation for career long professional development and learning.

Our sixth paper offers a new perspective on coaching as **Chris Reddy** considers the value of coaching young people. He argues from his experience that coaching is a great way to help young people manage the demands placed on them and be fully involved in their own goal setting process.

Mentoring is not confined to teacher education and in our seventh paper **Tom Leeder and Darren Moss** report on their research which indicates the learning and 'benefits' gained by being a sports coach mentor through utilising the concept of 'educative mentoring'.

Next we have a paper reflecting on the Women Leading in Education coaching pledge, introduced by the UK Department for Education. **Carly Waterman** is a leader in education, coach and coach trainer, and hence reflects on this programme with an informed perspective.

There are some powerful forms of professional learning structures available to teachers, and Learning Rounds is one of them. In our ninth paper researcher **Kenny Frederick** and participant **Clare Benton** offer evidence how and why Learning Rounds have impact.

The tenth paper is written by **Steven Riley** and is a reflection on his attendance at the The National Coaching Symposium 2018 and how it influenced his thinking regarding coaching and mentoring techniques to enhance the research and enquiry at his school.

**Lisa Lea-Weston** writes about supervision for school leaders in our eleventh paper. Supervision supports professionals to meet the complex challenges brought to them in their roles. Lisa explains that the capacity to be professionally vulnerable is key in supervision.

Our twelfth paper is by **James Underwood and Marta Kowalczyk-Walędziak** who offer a conceptual framework for understanding the professional communities that are built when teachers work together within projects that cross workplace and even national boundaries.

BELMAS, the British Educational Leadership, Management and Administration Society hold an annual conference which brings researchers and school leaders together. In our next paper **Deborah Outhwaite** offers a review of a range of conference sessions linking to themes of CollectivED.

Our fourteenth working paper is by **Russell Grigg and Helen Lewis** and offers practice insights into a process referred to as PIT Stop, which encourages teachers and observers to engage in focused formative discussion during a lesson observation itself.

This month **Mark Liddell** reviews John Campbell and Christian van Nieuwerburgh's book 'The Leader's Guide to Coaching in Schools', highlighting the value of the practical frameworks that are proposed and the extensive research which they are built upon.

And we round off this issue with a Thinking Aloud CollectivEd interview with **Sarah Jones** who reflects on the influences on her work as a teacher and leader as she moves into a new post.

So, this is another bumper issue, combining papers focused on a variety of practices, but all with a common thread – the ways that we as educators work together and in doing so learn together and can evoke changes in the education system. We are proud to be building a strong community through CollectivED and also to be drawing on the wisdom of different generations of educators.

## CollectivED NEWS

We are co-ordinating the national Coaching and Mentoring in Education Research network, which met for the first time in July and are now planning our first national conference for teachers, lecturers, school leaders, coaches, mentors, CPD co-ordinators and researchers.

You may like to note the following dates.

- February 22<sup>nd</sup> 2019  
Coaching and Mentoring in Education Research network meeting No. 2 – hosted by Birmingham City University
- July 3<sup>rd</sup> 2019  
Coaching and Mentoring in Education Research network meeting No. 3 – hosted by Leeds Beckett University
- July 4<sup>th</sup> 2019  
National Conference - The CollectivED Knowledge Exchange: creating professional learning opportunities through coaching and mentoring in education – to be held in Birmingham

To be added to our mailing list regarding these and other regional events please email [CollectivED@leedsbeckett.ac.uk](mailto:CollectivED@leedsbeckett.ac.uk) or keep an eye on twitter @CollectivED1.

### ***Professor Rachel Lofthouse***

@DrRLofthouse

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# Mentoring: Managed by Myth

## *A Research and Practice Insight Working Paper by J. K. Alexander*

### **Abstract**

Throughout the school session 2017-18, I mentored a newly qualified teacher (NQT) to successful completion of their probationary period of one year. Feeling dissatisfied by the experience, I explored Foucault's concept of governmentality to try and work out why. What I now recognise is that my actions as a mentor were a result of being socialised into norms embedded in myth. As a practising teacher with potentially many more mentees in the future, I wanted to understand my own actions and work out how to avoid repeating the same mistakes. I think I have discovered how to do this. By exploring the concept of mentoring, and linking this to an analysis of power, I can now begin my journey to being a better mentor.

### **Mentoring**

Much academic literature on mentoring begins with the traditional account of Mentor and Telemachus found in Homer's 'The Odyssey' (Colley, 2000). In Greek

mythology, when Odysseus left home to fight in a Greek campaign abroad, Telemachus, his son, was entrusted to the care of his father's friend, Mentor (Grassinger et al., 2010). Mentor acted as an experienced and trusted guide who provided support, advice and protection to Telemachus. Colley (2000) argues that in academic literature that cites The Odyssey as a source, one of two dominant narratives usually emerge: the figure of Mentor as a kindly and nurturing elder, and the function of Mentor as inspirer who provides counsel.

This model of mentoring is found in modern day conceptions of master and apprentice or teacher and pupil (Grassinger et al., 2010) but Colley (2000) cautions that it may not accurately match the mentoring arising from the relationship between Mentor and Telemachus. This view is supported by Roberts (1998) who notes that instead of a nurturing role model, Mentor was simply a friend of Odysseus.



Roberts writes, ‘...quite simply, Homer’s Mentor did not mentor. It was Fenelon, who in 1699 wrote *Les Aventures de Telemaque*...and bestowed (Mentor) with the qualities and attributes that are analogous with the current usage of the term’ (p.19). Nevertheless, a social construction or myth regarding the character and role of mentor and mentee has grown around the relationship between Homer’s Mentor and Telemachus. The following multi-attribute definition of mentoring is an example of such construction:

*a nurturing process in which a more skilled or more experienced person, serving as a role model, teaches, sponsors, encourages, counsels, and befriends a less skilled or less experienced person for the purpose of promoting the latter’s professional and/or personal development. Mentoring functions are carried out within the context of an on-going, caring relationship between the mentor and protégé.*

*(Anderson 1987, in Kerry and Mayes, 1995:29)*

This definition captures the complexity of skills, characteristics and traits which

dominate current conceptions of mentoring. When Foucault (1991) discusses the power of the norm, it is in such a definition that his concept of governmentality can be seen. When a concept becomes normalized it conditions how it is perceived and so becomes a tool that governs practices (Foucault, 1984 in Walkerdine, 1992).

### **Governmentality**

Foucault’s notion of governmentality offers a different perspective from traditional notions that see power as residing in a central institution or body, for example a monarchy holds power over its subjects. Instead, Foucault believes that power, and especially disciplinary power which operates to ‘make individuals...to provide a hold on their conduct’ (Foucault, 1991:170/172), is diffuse, ‘relational and discursive. It circulates everywhere through networks of relationships’ (Nicoll and Fejes, 2008:6). If power is found in the complex relationships that construct and control what people think and do, then understanding how power operates can become a tool which illuminates beliefs, behaviours and practices. In this way, Foucault’s



ideas about power, particularly disciplinary power, illuminates my experience of mentoring.

## Two Personal Reflections

Firstly, it is through reading about governmentality that I acknowledge the tremendous emotional labour I experienced in striving to live up to the mythic ideal of the perfect mentor. Added to Anderson's multi-attribute definition of mentoring is the findings of Roberts (1998:19) who provides an extensive list of the characterisation and roles of a mentor. To paraphrase; a mentor teaches, guides, is a role model, counsels, empowers, nurtures, provides friendship, encourages, is able to communicate, is flexible, has a sense of humour, is an authority in the field and interested in the mentee's growth and potential. Roberts concludes that this list is not exhaustive and he asks, 'what person then is best suited to such a daunting role?' (p.20). The normalisation of these attributes represents what Foucault would regard as an invisible power (Walkerdine, 1992) which governs beliefs and behaviours. The myth of Mentor influenced how I conducted myself as a mentor: I suppressed moments of annoyance because the myth presents an ideal of an ever-kindly and patient tutor and I hid

exhaustion because the myth presents an ideal of being always available and interested. I have felt guilt at 'not feeling like a very good mentor' even though I know the myth is a constructed ideal and not reality. When applied to mentoring, Foucault's analysis of power would identify my role of mentor as an object who becomes a subject. An object becomes a subject of power when it is socialised in particular ways and those ways become embedded in norms and structures. The subject is produced within the discourse and begins to act in expected ways. This is what Foucault describes as governmentality. For Foucault, an 'encounter between the technologies of domination and those of the self I call 'governmentality'' (Foucault, 1996 in Fendler, 2003:21). If I now ask myself why I accepted an embellished ancient Greek interpretation of the role of a mentor in the first place, a Foucauldian analysis points to the workings of discourse.

A discourse can be described as a way of making sense of the world. For Foucault, discourse is part of power and how power operates because it 'influences how ideas are put into practice and used to regulate the conduct of others' (Lin, 1998: n.p.). Rose (1992:161) describes it as 'practices through which we act upon ourselves and one another in order to make us particular kinds of being' meaning 'increasingly

specific regulation and internalized disposition' (Ranson, 2003:470) affect not just how teachers should perform but changes the way teachers act and think about themselves. In short, imposed and internalised beliefs and behaviours entwine to produce a particular desired outcome. In my mentoring experience the technologies of domination included the bureaucratic practices of professional standards and a weekly minuted mentoring meeting, in other words, the 'disciplinary writing' of Foucault (1991:190). The domination of the self is shown in that I wholly perceived these practices as normal and accepted the beliefs, behaviours and practices of mentoring without question.

My second reflection relates to evaluating assumptions. Van Ginkel et al. (2016:104) explain that mentoring 'styles or approaches refer to the typical forms of behaviour, acting or typical strategies that mentors employ. Conceptions, on the other hand, refer to the mental models and beliefs about mentoring and learning that mentors draw upon in thinking about practice'.

In this separation of thinking and behaviours, a tension in my experience of mentoring a NQT occurred because we held different conceptions of mentoring. Research on novice teacher mentoring

identifies two main distinct mentoring conceptions: an instrumental conception and a developmental conception (Van Ginkel et al., 2016). These authors conclude that mentors who draw on an instrumental mentoring conception 'orient themselves to concerns for effective teaching practice' while mentors holding a developmental mentoring conception are concerned about 'mentee learning and professional development' (p.105). In my experience of mentoring, my mentee was drawing on instrumental outcomes while I was concerned about development outcomes. This is not surprising. A NQT usually wants to learn how to teach quite quickly, wants to establish herself as a 'proper' teacher and wants to improve her performance. A twenty year career gap between myself and the NQT meant my priorities were different. My questions to the NQT were oriented to raising her awareness of 'interrelations between teaching and learning' while she wanted 'ready-made tools and routines for effective and efficient teaching' (Van Ginkel et al., 2016:105). This reflection highlights an assumption that both mentor and mentee wanted the same goals and would eventually arrive at the same place. Built into the myth of mentoring is that the result for both parties is satisfactory. In 'The Odyssey', Mentor achieves his goal of guiding Telemachus to achieve his goal of his father's return from battle. Their

thinking was aligned. However, when 'mental models and beliefs about mentoring' are unaligned (Van Ginkel et al., 2016:104), the myth arguably falls short.

At the beginning of this paper I claimed that I mentored a NQT to successful completion of their probationary period. In one sense this is true. Standards were met, forms were filled in and the NQT received an offer of a job. So why do I feel dissatisfied? The answer lies in the assumption of mutual satisfaction found in the myth of Mentor and in the troubling recognition that I have perpetuated the normalisation of behaviours that control and impact on the lives of others. I can claim to have trained a NQT into the basics of teaching but to what extent have I developed her capacity for agency, action or change? In a recent article, the scholar Henry Giroux (2018, n.p.) adopts a Foucauldian stance when he argues that 'domination is at its most powerful when its mechanisms of control and subjugation hide in the discourse of common sense and its elements of power are made to appear invisible'. As I reflect on the mentoring experience I now understand that an instrumental rationality dominated what I did and how I worked. External and internal subjectivities of power shaped my thinking, beliefs and actions and moulded me and the NQT into a recognizable norm,

and not into inspiring a challenge of dominant myths. A social construction of mentoring and market assumptions of efficiency and economy kept me accountable to neoliberal ideals. My NQT became in Foucault's words, 'a case...(an) individual...described, judged, measured, compared with others who has to be trained, classified, normalized...' (Foucault, 1991:191).

Policies, myths and other external and internal influences contribute to a normalization of concepts which form a disciplinary technology shaping my beliefs and practices. However, in reading about governmentality it becomes clear that these influences can be interrupted because power does not have to be negative. Resistance is intrinsic to governmentality when Foucault explicitly states, 'we must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms: it 'excludes', it 'represses', it 'censors'....In fact, power produces; it produces reality' (Foucault, 1991:194). Foucault's ideas of power and discourse illuminate that while there are 'practices of subjection', there are also 'practices of liberation' (Patrick, 2013:6). Mentoring need not be instrumental but could be a form of resistance if it opens up new spaces in which agency and action and change can appear. A careful reading of Foucault's governmentality offers the

possibility that through a critique of power and discourse alternative ideas can emerge thus creating new possibilities for beliefs, behaviours and practices.

Reflecting on this experience has demonstrated that theories such as Foucault's governmentality can be

used to interrogate and disturb previously unexamined notions.

The value of such an activity is that in illuminating current being, doing and thinking, a process of altering that being, doing and thinking can begin.

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# Working together: Coaching as the compass in the journey of implementation

## ***A Practice Insight Working Paper by Kelly Ashley and North Star TSA***

*Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success.'*

Henry Ford, American Industrialist

When considering the process of implementation – whether a small change in a classroom, a new approach adopted by a whole school or a large project involving multiple organisations – we must plan for the journey. The 'journey' of implementation is undulating, with twists and turns, steep slopes and meandering paths. We need to be prepared as we traverse this rugged terrain and revel when we find even ground. Our destination - success and improvement; our method - effective collaboration; our compass – coaching to empower others.

### **Context**

North Star TSA's DFE Strategic School Improvement Fund (SSIF) project, *Real Writing: Writing across the curriculum in science*, is a 5-term project (running from September 2017 to March 2019) with a

drive to improve writing in KS2, with a particular focus on pupils' application of literacy skills across the curriculum, in science.

### **Key Priority 1: To develop the role of middle leaders to drive improvement**

KPI 1.1. Develop expertise in monitoring and evaluation

KPI 1.2 Identify and address CPD needs

KPI 1.3 Support staff to embed new approaches

KPI 1.4 Effective use of coaching to drive change

### **Key Priority 2: To improve pedagogy to support opportunities for writing across the curriculum**

KPI 2.1 Develop pupils' independent writing skills

KPI 2.2 Ensure high standards and expectations of writing in English and across the curriculum

### **Key Priority 3: To improve approaches to assessment and moderation of writing across the curriculum**

KPI 3.1 Develop approaches to writing analysis, ensuring appropriate next steps in learning

KPI 3.2 Improve approaches to moderation, giving teachers a greater understanding of curriculum expectations and ensuring appropriate challenge

KPI 3.3 Plan a range of assessment opportunities, across the curriculum

There are ten participating schools within two local area 'hubs', with each hub supported by three 'Hub Leads' (Specialist Leaders of Education, SLEs, appointed by the TSA). The east 'hub' schools (Scarborough and Bridlington) are: St Peter's RC Primary School, St Joseph's RC primary, St. Benedict's RC primary, St George's RC primary and Our Lady and St Peter's RC primary. The central 'hub' schools (Harrogate, Thirsk and Ripon) are: Kirk Hammerton C of E Primary School, Staveley CP School, Moorside Junior School, Sowerby Academy and Topcliffe Academy. Science and English leads within each of the ten project schools have met regularly to build strong networks of support through collaboration. There are 36 participating KS2 teachers and 780 participating KS2 pupils, across the ten schools.

### ***Coming Together***

*Before we begin the journey of implementation, how can we ensure participants 'come together' in order to understand the core purpose and drive for improvement?*

English, Science and Hub Leads participated in two days of intensive coaching development training across the autumn 2017 and spring 2018 terms. Subject-specific training (relating to the teaching of writing, vocabulary development and scientific writing principles) was also 'front-loaded' into these first two terms of the project, allowing time for reflection and the opportunity trial and discuss approaches in their own school contexts, refining coaching skills with other leaders before engaging in coaching episodes with KS2 teachers in their own schools.

One of the cornerstone documents used to structure activities in the Real Writing project was *Developing Great Teaching* (Teacher Development Trust, 2014).

'Effective leaders did not leave the learning to their teachers – they became involved themselves.' (pg. 29) In January 2018, at the *Real Writing* launch day, 150 teaching assistants, teachers and Headteachers from all ten *Real Writing* project schools joined together to achieve clarity around the aims for success.

Senior and middle leaders were given the opportunity to draft project implementation plans, with the support of Hub Leads, whilst teachers and teaching assistants participated in subject-specific training relating to writing across the curriculum in

science. This event was designed for participants to 'come together' in order to understand the core purpose and drive for improvement. This collective understanding created a firm foundation for coaching episodes and further professional development led by English and Science leads during the spring 2018, springboarding discussions focused on strategies that could be utilised to maximise pupils' progress in writing.

## Keeping Together

*During the journey, how can we maintain momentum and 'keep together' when we hit metaphorical 'bumps' along the road to improvement?*

When designing the *Real Writing* project, coaching was integrated as a core component, not only to embed new learning, but to help tackle road blocks to implementation and empower staff. Effective professional development 'creates a rhythm of follow-up, consolidation and support activities' (Developing Great Teaching, pg. 13). Each term, leads have recorded written reflections about the implementation process using the following prompts:

- How have you used coaching skills to support others to develop practice and determine appropriate next steps in teaching, learning and assessment?
- How has your personal subject knowledge been extended/ enhanced as a result of 'Real Writing' activities this term?
- How have you personally developed as a leader, this term? What new skills and knowledge have you acquired and how has this helped you to lead more effectively?

*'Coaching has helped me to collaborate with the Headteacher to keep the momentum of the project going so that staff and children continue to engage.'*  
(English lead)

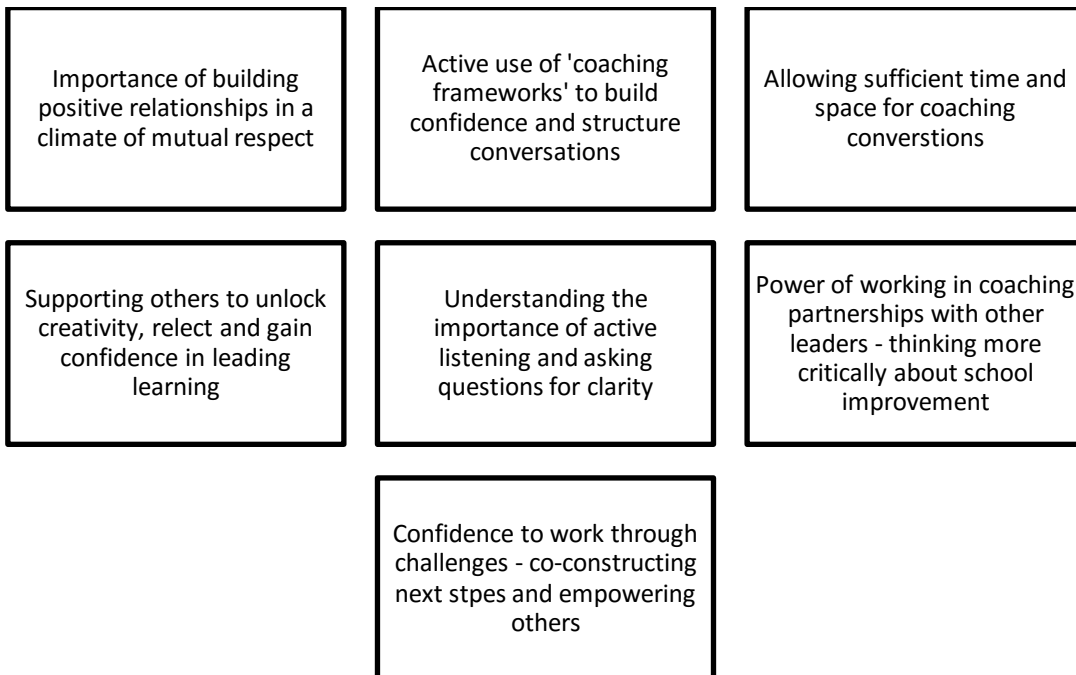
*'The use of coaching has really helped me to empower others.'* (Hub lead)

*'Hub days have been a great opportunity to network with other schools and share ideas.'* (Science lead)

The following key 'themes' relating to the impact of the use of coaching throughout the implementation process have emerged:



## Coaching and the Real Writing Project



### Working Together

*The journey towards 'working together' for success is dynamic – how can we promote dynamism in our leaders and systems?*

development through the final terms of the project. 'Sustaining implementation requires formal leaders to continually engage in implementation processes, provide purposeful support and 'walk the walk.' (EEF, 2018, pg. 38)

Next academic year, leaders will face transitional challenges as teachers meet new pupils in September, new staff are appointed and staff who have gained experience through the project move on to new roles. Dynamic systems have been established in schools to secure corporate memory, reducing the risk of skills and knowledge being lost in this transition. The focus of Term 3, has been to help leaders prepare for this transition and to discuss how they plan to sustain

Leaders have shared the following insights, reflecting on their personal journeys of leadership development:

- More confident in personal communication skills
- Opportunities to shape personal values as a leader and greater awareness and understanding of the role
- Learning to adapt without compromising long-term goals

- Embracing challenges and using coaching as a vehicle for change
- Asking questions rather than providing solutions; Giving others space to come up with solutions rather than 'fixing'
- Working more effectively with colleagues in collaboration to maximise pupil progress

## Conclusion

The ten schools participating in the Real Writing project are now at the mid-point of their implementation journey. Before the project began, we planned our route carefully, linking evidence of 'what works' for implementation to our intended project activities. We ensured the centrality of project ownership, offering schools opportunities to adapt the 'journey' to their own context without losing project integrity, resulting in schools being more likely to sustain approaches in the long term. Core strategic leadership was established and strengthened, using coaching as the 'compass' - leading the

way and empowering staff as they adopted principles to improve writing across the curriculum. Careful, planned monitoring of impact throughout has helped to steer the course of implementation and ensure that schools have maintained focus and momentum.

Conversations set ideas into motion, helping us to delve more deeply into our own thinking. Coaching is the vehicle for enticing these conversations to the surface, revealing strengths and challenges, helping us to map out our own personal journey of development – empowered to positively effect change; working together to achieve success.

*'The opportunity to work with a variety of different schools has helped me realise that improvement must be co-created and owned in order to effectively implement change.'*

(Hub lead)

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# **The Impact of Government Reform on the Conceptualisations of Professionalism in Compulsory Education in England;**

**Considering the National Standards of Excellence for Headteachers and the Teachers'  
Standards through the Lens of Critical Discourse Analysis**

***A Research Working Paper by Nicola Crossley***

## **Abstract**

In recent years government reform has focused on the expectations of practice for professionals in the education sector. In the last three years alone, revised standards have been published for Headteachers and Teachers. But what model of professionalism do these standards seek to promote?

The focus of the work which follows is concerned with analysing the language used within such policies in order to evaluate whether conceptualisations of professionalism are altered over time, by charting the development of policy from 2004 to 2015 for the Headteachers' standards and from 2007 to 2012 for the Teachers' standards, through the lens of critical discourse analysis.

In exploring the language of the standards, the author will also consider the nature of professionalism and discuss whether any conceptualisation can ever be articulated which can produce certainty and consensus of understanding.

## **What is professionalism?**

This question has formed many a debate over the years and continues to feature prominently, with academics asserting that this rather depends on the context. My thinking begins from a literary position of considering being 'professional' as an adjective, or being a 'professional' as a noun and then to 'professionalism' as a concept; however, I believe these three elements all require specific skills and/or attributes to be exhibited for an individual to be considered as such and therein lies the problem, for who decides what skills and attributes epitomise a professional disposition?

Arguably you can be a professional who acts unprofessionally and likewise you can act in a professional manner when you do not work in a job considered to be an archetypal 'profession'. So, when does a 'job' become a 'profession'? This problem

is highlighted further by Fox who states that professionalism means different things to different people. Without a language police, however, it is unlikely that the term professional will be used in only one concrete way (1992, cited in Evans 2008).

From an educational perspective, Nicholas and West-Burnham consider the movement through a “Maslow-type hierarchy” (2016, pg. 190) identifying that a profession is characterised through integrity, dedication, discipline, specialisation, a sense of service.

<b>Vocation</b>	A sense of being called, personal authenticity – moral and spiritual imperatives, altruism, sacrifice, service, passion and creativity – intrinsic motivation
<b>Profession</b>	Integrity, dedication, discipline, specialisation, a sense of service
<b>Career</b>	Personal growth, enhancement
<b>Job</b>	Diligence, honesty, ‘a fair day’s work’, clear boundaries, short-term engagement – extrinsic motivation

*Nicholas and West-Burnham (2016)  
“Different Levels of Engagement with Work”*

### ***The Nature of the Problem***

“Teacher professionalism in England is constantly changing.” (Helsby, 1999, pg. 93).

The education profession is constantly subject to policy reform, updates and change; all of which have a direct impact on pedagogy and practice – but which also arguably impact on what is understood as professionalism, the expectations around conceptualisations of professionalism and the standards which influence practice.

Government reform appears to have directed the education profession for the last 30 years since the 1986 Education Act and has resulted in a re-defining of what is meant by teacher professionalism (Day and Smethem, 2009). The aim of such reform has quite rightly been to improve educational standards and outcomes for all learners; however, there is a suggestion that this has come at a cost, for reform may not always lead to renewal (Day and Smethem, 2009).

It could be argued that with reform comes pressure, expectation and accountability, which although also apparent in other professions, does not necessarily produce the same negativity. Day (2007) suggests the current organisational climate in schools is based upon distrust of Teachers’ ability to teach well without being subject to annual public assessment, evaluation and monitoring, and inspection of their work through a series of regulatory devices. Such a climate arguably challenges notions of

professional integrity. This therefore suggests that the nature of the problem in conceptualising professionalism is situated within the tension which exists between the positioning of autonomy and accountability and of the resulting disjuncture which arises through policy.

Perhaps the nature of the problem is centred around the appropriateness of imposing external standards on the profession; particularly when they are perceived as check-lists of accountabilities and therefore risk de-professionalising the profession, as Evans (2003) and Goepel (2012) discuss? If it is the case that professionalism is inherent within the characteristics of the individual, as is suggested by Nicholas and West-Burnham (2016) and the qualities of integrity and moral obligation are examples of this, then can it, and should it be something which is measurable by a set of standards?

Teachers, however, are clearly not the only professional body to have externally imposed standards to adhere to; professionals within Law and Medicine also have clear criteria and expectations of professional practice. Perhaps; however, this is more socially accepted because the 'stakes are higher'; when lives are at risk – either through the protection of freedom or health, then perhaps this is an acceptable expectation

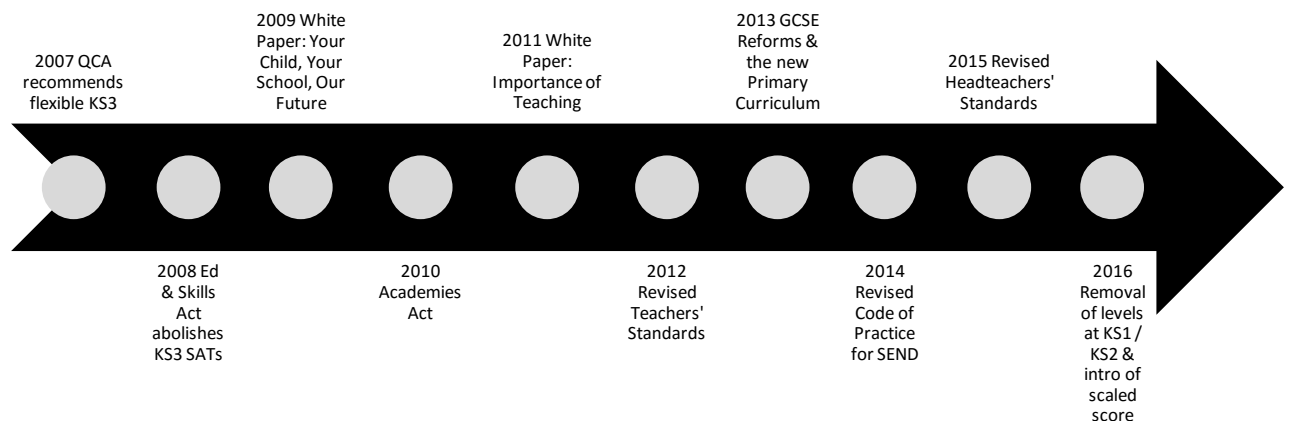
and safeguard? This therefore presents an alternative interpretation to the nature of the problem, for if teachers are opposed to the external positioning of policy, is it because they do not see it as a 'high stakes' profession, which then questions whether it is a profession at all?

The positioning of the teaching 'profession' and the drive to raise its status, through discussions of the tension between autonomy and accountability is also interesting to consider. For is professionalism defined when you have the trust to be autonomous or is it when you are subject to externally imposed standards due to the high worth of the role within wider society? Alternatively, is a profession established as such when it is trusted to develop accountability measures which are monitored by its own professional bodies, as is the case in Medicine and Law?

### **Context**

In the last ten years alone, the educational landscape has continually changed, resulting in far-reaching implications for those employed within the profession. Ball reports that "on 2 July 2012, the Department for Education website listed 4,238 publications related to education and cognate matters that is, policy in varying forms, with varying degrees of imperative" (2013, loc 226); some of these

are indicated in the graphic below and highlight further that reform continues to be implemented on an annual basis:



*Fig. 1 Timeline of main reform since 2007*

On gathering the primary research documents for study in 2015 I was reflecting on the extent of the reforms driven by Michael Gove as Secretary of State for Education (2010-2014) and of those continued by Nicky Morgan who succeeded Gove in July 2014. In July 2016, the appointment of the new Secretary of State for Education, Justine Greening, followed the shock resignation of the Prime Minister, David Cameron who was succeeded by Theresa May. In January 2018 we witnessed another change in leadership, such that at the time of writing (for these things change quickly)

Damian Hinds is now Secretary of State for Education.

This acknowledgement of change is relevant, for recent political history provides evidence of reforms which are imposed on the education system as a direct result of a change in leadership.

### **The Research and Findings**

"It pays to closely engage those who will be most directly affected by reform; social dialogue is the glue for successful educational reform" (OECD, 2011, pg. 58).

The aim of the research was to explore what impact the language of government policy, as expressed through the Head Teachers' standards and the Teachers' standards, has on conceptualisations of teacher professionalism and to consider the implications for practitioners in England. An initial observation asserts that the language of government reform, as expressed through the Teachers' standards, necessarily has an impact on conceptualisations of Teacher professionalism by nature of the fact that it represents the mandatory minimum expectations of practice for Teachers in compulsory education in England.

However, there is an identified risk of ambiguity for Headteachers whose 'Standards of Excellence' are for *guidance* only, despite the assertion that they are underpinned by the Teachers' standards. As a result, there is both a distinct hierarchy which exists in terms of the formal accountabilities expected, as expressed through the standards, and a suggestion that the evidence of demonstrable professionalism also differs, with higher expectations placed on Teachers rather than Headteachers.

The chart on the following page illustrates the alignment of the top ten lexis across all four standards over time, which were

found through the research, so that the reader is able to make connections and identify where consistency may suggest a shared conceptualisation of the profession.

Comparing the lexis used across the standards over time, it could be suggested that the conceptualisation of professionalism is initially marked by a consistency seen in the use of the terms 'professional', 'practice' and 'performance'. As a result, we can perhaps assert that the characteristics which best represent the role of Headteachers and Teachers is that they are 'professional', they are clearly defined by their 'practice', which I am interpreting to mean pedagogy, and they are subject to structures which require evidence of 'performance'; either of themselves or of the pupils they teach.

It would be a reasonable observation to make that both the 2004 and 2015 standards for Headteachers and the 2007 Teachers' standards provide evidence of consistency in terms of the attributes which are understood to conceptualise professionalism within the profession; all place a strong emphasis on 'learning', 'development', 'community', and 'knowledge', which is perhaps what one may expect to hear if asked as to the role of the Teacher today.



Top 10 Language Use Over Time (as evidence of consistency)			
2004 HT Standards	2015 HT Standards	2007 Teacher Standards	2012 Teacher Standards
Professional	Professional	Professional	Professional
Performance	Performance	Performance	Performance
Practice	Practice	Practice	Practice
Learning	Learning	Learning	Conduct
Development	Development	Development	Qualified
Community	Community	Community	Demonstrate
Effective	Effective	Effective	England
Knowledge	Knowledge	Knowledge	Subject
Education	National	Education	Education
Management	Staff	National	Understanding

It would be a reasonable observation to make that both the 2004 and 2015 standards for Headteachers and the 2007 Teachers' standards provide evidence of consistency in terms of the attributes which are understood to conceptualise professionalism within the profession; all place a strong emphasis on 'learning', 'development', 'community', and 'knowledge', which is perhaps what one may expect to hear if asked as to the role of the Teacher today.

However, in analysing this further, perhaps these characteristics are more fitting in answering the question *what is*

*the role of school?* as we would absolutely recognise school as a place of learning and development, which brings the community together in the pursuit of knowledge. Perhaps therefore, this is a possible explanation for the difference seen in the 2012 Teachers' standards, which arguably set the standards for the *individual* within the profession instead.

### Summary

The research identified that current perceptions of an increased accountability for Teachers over time are valid observations and that as a result, it is Teachers and not Headteachers who are

subject to the greatest scrutiny of expectation, which it is argued, has the potential to impact on conceptualisations of professionalism over time. The summary below identifies the key observations made as a result of the research which have the potential to impact on conceptualisations of professionalism for both the individual and wider society.

- 1) Language of accountability used within the Teachers' standards has increased over time for Teachers – and considerably so since 2007;
- 2) Language of autonomy used within the Headteachers' standards has increased over time – but not considerably so;
- 3) Language of collaboration used within the Teachers' standards has increased slightly over time for Teachers;
- 4) There has been a reduction in the use of 'learning' as a key term across both standards over time;
- 5) The use of 'development' as a key term has increased over time for Headteachers but has decreased for Teachers;
- 6) Whilst there is some consistency in the use of language of 'performance' and 'practice' across both sets of standards, it is no longer the case that the language of the Teachers' and Headteachers' standards share

complete synchronicity and this therefore suggests that the standards expected for Headteachers and Teachers are different.

### ***Implications for Policy and Practice***

We cannot predict how individuals will respond to the standards created in the future, but we can take steps to refine the understanding of the intended message. Policy makers need to acknowledge their position as manipulators who exercise control and power over the profession; they should not hide behind a veil of empty rhetoric of 'teacher autonomy' as it arguably does not exist. Hierarchy within society necessarily includes control and power; this is neither positive nor negative unless we pretend it does not exist.

As Assunca and Shiroma (2003) confirm, educational policy is driven by different priorities, which are dependent upon the social, political, cultural and economic context in which they are embedded; this is necessarily the case and therefore policy writers are urged to understand and acknowledge that policy is written with an element of bias which is unavoidable. As a result, it is equally necessary for policy writers to collaborate with those who it affects, as a common-sense approach if nothing more.

However, it is perhaps also important for practitioners to accept that the profession is necessarily one of high levels of accountability, which cannot *afford* the freedom of autonomy, particularly when the outcomes impact so heavily on wider society and future sustainability. It would perhaps be more appropriate for the dialogue of 'professional autonomy' to be rejected and instead a dialogue of 'shared accountability' to be promoted.

In engaging with a dialogue of 'shared accountability', practitioners and policy makers would benefit from unpicking the findings of the research to decide whether the themes demonstrated, and the language used, is actually what is desired and needed for the profession, for only then will we achieve success in moving 'policy into practice'.

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# Coaching, Leadership and Footy

## *A Thinkpiece Working Paper by Andrew Mears*

At the time of writing, the Summer is confounding our preconceptions, both with the endless sunshine, and because of the largely unexpected success of the England Football Team, led by Gareth Southgate. Like most people, I have been very pleasantly surprised not only by England's results, but by the manner in which Gareth has encouraged the team towards their very best performance and behaviour. Present has been thoughtfulness, clear communication, approachability, respect and trust; absent has been bravado, ego, talk of accountability and a culture of fear.

My elation is however, mixed with a deep-seated frustration that it has taken the back pages of the papers to perhaps start to unpick the decades of relentlessly sterile, facile and often aggressive ways that organisations have been corralled, cajoled and often directed to behave towards the people who work in them. I'm talking about schools. The places I love.

Nobody can be sure about how and when the undermining of teachers' personal and professional judgement and development

began, but my recollection as a leader in school was that there was a message under the surface of schools being run as businesses. Research about the most "productive" industrial manufacturing processes started popping up; Personnel Departments were rebranded as Human Resources, and to our shame we chuckled privately instead of resisting publicly. For me, the rot really set in when some guru or other persuaded leaders in schools and elsewhere that being liked was a potential disadvantage in developing a high performing organisation, and implied that leaders who valued relationship cohesion were currying favour and avoiding holding people to account. The loaded messages rained down on schools and were accepted by the beguiled and the fearful, who saw an easier and simpler way to lead and a path toward acceptance as a true business leader. Teachers were portrayed as not living in the "real world" and were dragged by legislation and multiple accountabilities into an ecosystem where those with dissenting voices were characterised as shirking responsibilities. Gentle, patient leaders were readily labelled as weak or meek.

As the years rolled on, inspections, whether by a stone-faced Ofsted or pseudo-expert, built the accountability model as the pinnacle of practice and the only game in town. It became easier to demand results from teachers whilst being a few steps removed from them; confrontation could be delegated and people skills were seen as unnecessarily and maybe even unhelpfully muddying the school improvement water. Remote leadership became an ambition. Executive Headteacher? Yes, please. Short-term-school-turn-around-super-salary-Super-Heads with fire-and-hire shape-up or ship-out philosophy were being sought without a thought to the medium to long term effect upon our profession. New leaders for under-performing schools didn't need to worry about being liked or respected by teachers as it would be more difficult to crack the whip or purge and still sleep at night. Governors and LEAs cared little about how results improved, just about when, which fostered the very short term fixes which undermined systemic growth. Teachers who were not the finished article needed to be encouraged to find fulfilment elsewhere. Wind this all forward to today where we find school leaders crowing that their schools will not hire anyone but the best, provided the best is in their own image. We are into a second generation of teachers who might only have a

leadership model like this to fall back on when deciding on how to encourage the best from colleagues. Is it really a surprise that young, inspiring and inspired teachers and future leaders hear no folk songs in working towards this kind of leadership?

Until this summer, even elite level team sport has used this model to allegedly produce excellence. Recently the England Mens Rugby coach justified his choice of Captain by saying that the players were afraid of this new leader and so would produce more and better. On the same page of the newspaper sat a piece narrating huge numbers of elite athletes who reported being bullied by coaches who demanded results of an ever higher level, rubbing their excuses and undermining their mental health.

The direction of travel has been clear and relentless; results matter and the people do not and we can't have both.

At the same time, truly heroic leaders and coaches have been quietly keeping both eyes focused on developing children and teachers, knowing that results follow and the system can be sustained. These leaders talk about *the* school, not *my* school, *the* team, not *my* team, without worrying that the lack of possession or ownership implies a shirking of responsibility. Thankfully, the use of

Coaches in schools is gaining a foothold, but with inevitable cultural dissonance where schools have an accountability model shot throughout them like Blackpool Rock.

We can't roll the clock back and neither should we try, but we should now understand that there is a more satisfying, pleasurable, sociable, sustainable and effective way of producing excellence other than through fear and a focus on deficits. One which, like Gareth has done, inspires loyalty, effective communication

and respect for growth to come. It cherishes the essential fun which comes from trusting and getting to know each other, which amongst other merits means that most can understand when and if tough decisions have to be made. It works and it always has, but it needs leaders who can resist short-termism, the largest salaries and in the current climate, a possible Honour.

Advantages however, include the unlikelihood that the team will privately spit in your Bovril.

# **Mentoring as part of career long professional development and learning**

## ***A Research Working Paper by Rachel Lofthouse***

### **Looking beyond the deficit**

Sometimes it feels like we approach professional practice in education with a deficit model. What else should we be doing? What could be improved through marginal gains? What stretching targets can we agree? Who needs to be held to account? What works, and by implication, what doesn't work? Mentoring in Initial Teacher Education is a professional practice that is often framed as something to be improved. My research has contributed to this, and my recently published conceptual paper in the *International Journal of Mentoring and Coaching in Education* (Lofthouse, 2018) does indicate some of the aspects of mentoring that are problematic and have the potential to be developed. This working paper is deliberately not taking a deficit approach. It has two distinct parts: firstly, it is a reflection on a small scale survey of student teachers' positive experiences of being mentored, and secondly it introduces a conceptualisation of how the potential of mentoring might be maximised.

### **Benefits of being mentored: a simple survey**

So, I want to start this working paper from a positive place, from the perspective of student teachers reflecting on what they felt was the greatest benefit of working with their school-based mentor during their school placements. The sample size is small, with just 33 students who were part of the cohorts on Leeds Beckett University ITTE courses in 2017-18 completing the survey. Of these, 48% were studying on the Primary or Early Years PGCE, 46% on the Secondary PGCE and just 6% on the BA with QTS. Of the PGCE students 1/3 were registered on a School Direct route, and 2/3 were following the core university provision.

This is a small evidence base, and beyond providing information regarding their training route, the students were asked to only provide a response to the question of the greatest benefit of working with their mentor. Most of the responses were short, single sentences highlighting one benefit (as might be expected when asked what was *the* greatest benefit), with a few responses being more extended.



Sometimes these more extended answers meant that the students also reflected on more negative aspects of their mentoring experiences, but these were not solicited on this occasion. Comparisons will not be drawn between evidence emerging from different routes as they are not possible given the small sample size.

The students' responses to the open comment question revealed three dominant themes as indicated in the table below.

Theme as indicated by words used by students in their comments	% of respondents using these words
The mentor offered <i>support</i> , or was <i>supportive (including reassurance)</i>	36
Learning from the <i>mentor's experience of teaching</i>	36
The mentor helped set <i>targets</i> and / or gave <i>feedback</i>	33
The mentor offered <i>advice or guidance</i> or suggested <i>good practice</i>	21

These themes are closely related to each other and inevitably overlap; they also obscure some possible nuances in the mentoring approaches adopted. For example, some mentors will have offered feedback in the form of direct advice about what to do differently, based on their own experience. Other mentors might have highlighted the good practice already present in their student teacher's own teaching as a key form of feedback, and provided questions and provocations for students to reflect on. Both approaches could be done in a supportive manner, with an understanding of how the student might be feeling or might most need at different stages in their placement. Some student quotes illustrate this;

*It was very beneficial having someone to encourage targets and keep progress more focused. My mentors were both kind and supportive emotionally if needed, and offered advice, ideas, teaching tips and guidance through the teacher's standards. (Lisa, Primary PGCE)*

*Being able to draw on his experiences and he shared good practise. He wanted me to keep improving, so was a positive role model. (Charlotte, BA Hons Primary Education with QTS)*

*My mentor was fantastic, and could give me her current knowledge within the school. You could reflect on practice together to improve teaching for the next lesson. (Hannah, Secondary PGCE)*

*Experience, working towards targets and building on strengths. Constant pointers to work on. (Alex, Secondary PGCE)*

Interestingly one student wrote the following about her mentor:

*She was understanding and supportive when I was struggling, even though she was unable to give me useful professional guidance to help me improve. (Rachael, PGCE Primary)*

Other students indicated specific areas of practice which they were supported to develop. Four students referred to advice on teaching styles, two referred to advice on planning, another two to behaviour management, and two to school policies and expectations. Single students also picked out differentiation, subject knowledge, work-life balance and job interviews. If nothing else this limited data does illustrate the breadth of the 'teaching practice curriculum' that mentors are expected to cover.

*She was part of the leadership team so helped as much as possible to allow me to correspond to the school policies and expectations. (Sophie, Primary PGCE)*

*I gained from seeing another teaching style and approach to behaviour, you realise that everyone has different teaching style/approach, this helped my confidence. Also got an incredible amount of support, not just with lesson planning and observations, but with preparation for job interviews and writing*

*personal statement. (Helen, Secondary PGCE).*

### **Thinking about mentoring as workplace learning**

It is helpful at this point to think about mentoring as a means to enable workplace learning, and to draw on two key constructs of workplace learning offered by Stephen Billett (2011).

Billett draws our attention to the three key goals of workplace learning. In the case of student teachers this would suggest that we need to firstly ensure that teaching is the student teacher's desired goal, and assuming that it is to then help them to identify prospective specific career interests. Billett goes on to propose that workplace learning should offer the support that student teachers need to help them to gain key occupational capacities, in other words learning the skills needed to do the job as they enter the profession. He concludes that workplace learning should allow the new entrant into the profession to develop occupational competencies that they will need for future professional learning, ensuring that they have the skills needed to keep developing.

Billett also refers to key dimensions of practice-based workplace learning, of

pedagogies, curriculum and epistemologies) which can again be translated into mentoring practices. The guidance, feedback, and target setting can be framed as aspects of mentoring *practice pedagogies* which offer appropriate teaching and learning techniques in support of workplace learning at career entry stage. Our student teachers' survey results suggest that they find these aspects of mentoring productive and supportive. Mentoring can be conceptualised as part of a *practice curriculum* in ITE, intersecting with more formal training, learning by direct experience of teaching (and associated tasks), personal reflection, study and assignment writing. Mentoring is one of the key learning opportunities offered to student teachers in their new workplaces, and itself supports the coverage of the relevant teacher training curriculum content (as indicated above by the reference to what the student teachers learned about from their mentors).

The good news is that skilled mentors, working within schools and for ITE providers where there is well planned and resourced mentoring can ably contribute to good workplace learning through appropriate mentoring practice pedagogies and curriculum. The less easily controlled dimension of practice-

based learning are the personal epistemologies that both mentors and student teachers enter into the mentoring with. In simple terms these are the beliefs and values that the participants bring to learning in the workplace and to their roles. The mentoring practices reported favourably on by the student teachers in the survey highlighted the element of support and advice. This may seem unquestionable, but not all student teachers experience this during their placements, with some feeling judged, monitored and left to fend for themselves. This has been identified in earlier research (including my own, Lofthouse and Thomas, 2014) as making mentoring a potentially vulnerable workplace learning practice. While this working paper is focused on the good news it is worth highlighting that some students clarified what they recognised as beneficial because their mentoring experiences had been inconsistent. Two survey responses illustrate this, and perhaps point to both the limiting and the enabling epistemological values and beliefs held by different mentors;

*Just having a great wealth of experience always there and always being so helpful. Had a great time compared to my first placement which was so unsupportive and didn't get any help! (Elliot, Secondary PGCE)*

*Helpful meetings and conversations about lessons with ways to improve and also notes*

*on the positive things that I was doing. Helping me to settle into school life with ease. (Lauren, Secondary PGCE)*

Despite this being a small survey, what is evident from the student teachers' reflections is that mentors really can make a difference to student teachers meeting the demands and challenges created by their placement experiences. This occurs in very practical terms but also in more emotional ones. Student teachers recognise the role that mentors play in getting them through the procedures associated with the course (such as lesson observations, target setting and demonstrating evidence of meeting the required standards). They also are grateful and gain confidence when they are given genuine and timely support and guidance by their mentors.

### **Thinking about mentoring as formative professional learning**

In the second part of this paper I want to draw on a conceptual model of professional learning for practice development which can be applied to mentoring (Lofthouse, 2018). This conceptual model emerged during my own PhD research and was developed from my perspective as an experienced teacher

educator based in the English university ITE sector and draws on both my practical experience in that role and the body of my associated published research. The model itself is visually complex, and rather than reproduce that here I will highlight some of its key features. It is based on two key aspects of professional learning; attributes which exist in both individuals and institutions which have the capacity to promote and support learning, and the learning behaviours and cultures that can result.

During the ITE programme encouraging the student teacher to explore new ideas for practice can seem challenging, when often what everyone seems to be seeking is the passing on of the 'what works' tips and routines. However professional learning and the development of practices can be enhanced if mentors create opportunity for **creativity**. This is perhaps best explained as mentors recognising the importance that to support their learning student teachers need to be given permission to problem-solve; opportunities to innovate; and access to alternative practices and perspectives. Through this the student teachers can become open to a range of other ideas; gaining the capacity to develop original thinking and the confidence to go beyond routine practices. This is essential if student

teachers are to thrive in a range of (often as yet unknown) future professional contexts, and also opens up the two-way street of mentoring, from which mentors are also benefitting from the joint exploration of new approaches to teaching.

Secondly, mentors should offer **solidarity**. This starts with the support that so many student teachers acknowledge and appreciate, but goes further. Developing a sense of solidarity allows student teachers and their mentors to understand others' needs, to take responsibility for what matters and to be part of a democracy of accountability; and to do so by engaging with their peers, their students and the wider community. To develop solidarity which allows them to see beyond their personal experiences and immediate concerns student teachers and mentors need opportunities for professional dialogue, chances to engage in collaboration and joint enterprises with others, and the spaces to create shared values.

There is also a need for mentors to offer **authenticity**. What I mean by this is that they can help new teachers to seek to understand the socio-cultural characteristics of the broad educational

and social landscapes within which they work and the details of the specific contexts of their emerging practice. This means recognising how these characteristics create tensions in, and priorities of, the educational setting in which teachers work. This is only possible if student teachers are motivated to learn and take account of the ethical dimensions and dilemmas of their practice. Both mentors and student teachers need to bring their own values into their practice and also to let their learning result in the evolution of their values over time.

But there are tensions in creating and sustaining the rich practices of mentoring we might aim for. I want to consider tensions as educative opportunities which are often missed, or activities started but not sustained or which are too frequently poorly planned for. My research suggests that when teachers learn and develop their practices there is the potential for their own learning behaviours to change (they are constantly in formation), and for the organisations and the wider system that they work in to change too; but that this is not guaranteed, and indeed sometimes it is quite actively suppressed. Mentoring could contribute to this virtuous circle.

So, let me introduce three more critical concepts; of the necessity that student teachers and mentors are able to articulate their practice and learning, to engage in and with critique and also to expand on their learning. These are the opportunities that are too often missed because the educational landscape that student teachers and mentors inhabit can be relatively restrictive, too often performative and sometimes even punitive (not to mention fractured, unforgivably busy and underfunded).

So first let's focus on the importance of mentors and student teachers **articulating** their learning. Ask yourself what opportunities you as a mentor have to explain your practices and your thinking to others and to make your learning public. Now ask these questions about the student teachers. How often do we ensure that student teachers and mentors have genuine opportunities to contribute to an accessible professional knowledge base? What work do we do that ensures that we develop a shared language between education practitioners, for examples between the early years, schools, college and university sectors, and between the professions and communities with whom we share responsibilities for learning and wellbeing? Could your mentoring facilitate this?

Secondly I want to be realistic about the importance of **critique**. Engaging critically is not the same as being the bearer or recipient of criticism. It means that student teachers and mentors put effort into analysing practice evidence, are encouraged to reflect critically on practice, research and theory, and become open to engaging in processes of critique. Ask yourself how often we create a safe space for this? Is the culture that exists in schools one in which professionals are invited not just to be evidence-informed, but also to critique the forms of evidence they are offered or asked to collect. How often do student teachers get to work slowly and intelligently, where they are allowed to tune, attune and refine their own practices, rather than be nudged or forced to adopt someone else's at someone else's speed? How often do student teachers and their mentors get to engage with and create networks of critical friends, who provoke them to think, to experiment and to aspire? How often does your mentoring create safe, two-way dialogue, which facilitates critique (not judgement or criticism)?

Unless we create these opportunities the final unresolved tension will be that we have fostered restrictive rather than expansive learning environments. If teachers' learning throughout their careers

does matter (including our new teachers), it is because we have allowed that learning to **expand** educational practice, opportunities and outcomes. To enable this means that we have allowed student teachers to develop dialogic thinking and self-regulation; to develop personal theories and models to inform their practice and to make better use of sound evidence to contribute to organisational development (such as the writing of curriculum or the consideration of new assessment policies). Ask yourself whether as a mentor you have given new teachers the tools to do this and whether we allow them to develop educative values which help them to develop values-based policies, cultures and practices.

## Conclusion

We know that good mentoring is essential when student teachers spend so much of their time in schools, and we know that it can enhance their workplace learning. Guaranteeing the quality and integrity of mentoring across diverse placements, for students with a wide range of starting points and personal values and beliefs about teaching and learning, is not without its challenges. There are time and resource implications which can hit mentors in schools who are already feeling stretched by their teaching workload hard. In these circumstances

there are at least three options for mentoring student teachers.

One option is to make the mentoring streamlined, focused and efficient. The potential problem with this is that it becomes procedural and relatively restrictive in terms of the student teachers learning environment.

Another option is to see the student teachers as a resource, some-one to get up to speed as quickly as possible so that they can ease some of the burden on other teachers. This seems sensible, and is often welcomed initially by student teachers, who want to take the reins, and feel that they will learn best 'on the job'.

Finally, there is an option of making the mentoring itself both formative and capacity building, a practice which actually helps all involved to learn from each other, to engage with evidence and to develop the sort of adaptive expertise that might make thriving rather than surviving a reality. This is not just a question of meeting the immediate needs of each new cohort of student teachers, this is also a question of sustaining the teaching profession.



I will finish with a final quote from a student teacher, who wrote just two words when considering the greatest benefit of working with her school-based mentor. I

am left wondering what the mentoring story behind her response was;

***Developed resilience (Rebecca, Primary PGCE).***

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# Coaching: A young person's perspective

## *A Thinkpiece Working Paper by Chris Reddy*

Let me take you back to Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> March. I was on my way over to Leeds Beckett University for their inaugural CollectivED event - 'In Conversation' - Coaching in education: *why bother?* I really wasn't sure how the event or the 'conversation' would go. The question, 'Why bother?', had been playing on my mind. I was expecting to meet academics who were seriously challenging the need for coaching in education. As a coach, and one who loves working with schools, teachers and young people...I was ready for a big debate!

It soon became apparent that I need not have worried. The room was full of expertise and energy around the subject. It was here when I really started to consider, that if coaching is so important for teaching professionals, we need to move the conversation to young people too.

For me, adults and young people are very similar. We have similar needs, interests, ambitions, fears, anxieties and insecurities. We know effective coaching can support this, and done well, it has real power to motivate, develop confidence,

empower, shift belief systems and give clarity to the way people think and behave. Why, if coaching is so positive, can't we let young people get in on the action too?

I'm yet to meet an education professional who is not in their role for the right reasons. The education system is full of people looking to make a positive impact to the lives of young people and create a greater number of life changes in order for them to succeed. With this being the case, why not implement coaching, one of our most effective tools to help bring about deep and long-lasting change?

Education professionals are line managed usually by one person, whilst I accept they need to answer to others, typically their line management is through one member of staff and their performance management runs through that same person. Young people have a lot coming at them. Just think about the amount of people they must answer to. It's like being line managed by an army!

Take a moment to consider the line management a young person must contend with. They have a teacher for

each subject, a head of year, a form teacher, maybe a mum, a dad and possibly a step mum or step dad, plus other services which are there to support thrown into the equation. The number of people they answer to is quite large. This wouldn't usually be a problem, but if each 'line manager' has different standards, expectations, belief systems, ways of motivating them, disciplining them and supporting them, the world of a young person suddenly gets quite confusing. Whilst this is nothing new, the difference today is the constant backdrop of social comparison which now exists through social media. In conjunction with this, is the added academic pressure schools now place on them which is incredible. Young people have to negotiate their way through all their 'line managers', in order to please everyone. Some do this well, some pretend to do this well and some tie themselves in knots and fail miserably.

### **Coaching with young people: *Why Bother?***

"It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men."

Frederick Douglas

With a specific focus on coaching with young people, I'm fortunate that my experience is wide and varied. I've been

able to work with young people from differing social and economic backgrounds and those with a range of aspirations and self-belief systems. My work takes place in various settings. Some, through my role as a Student Performance and Development Leader at Rochdale Sixth Form College and my private work takes place in school settings, my coaching space at home or in local parks and planned walking routes which we all have access to. This variety of experience is important to me and ensures my journey is one of constant learning. I expect my clients to reflect and push themselves, the work I do ensures I continuously pause, think and work to leave my comfort zone also. With coaching being a 'people's business', it's important for me to get out and meet people to share the work I do. This work comes from networking events, personal contacts, volunteering and collaborative work through sharing best practice.

Coaching is a great way to help young people manage the demands placed on them. As you can imagine, the coaching and workshops I run, cover a range of challenges, goals and developmental opportunities for young people. Through this work, I have noticed 5 key areas where young people see real benefits and experience positive results when being coached well.

## **Space**

Coaching provides a space. Importantly, a non-judgmental space for them to reflect, take stock and look forward to the future. They may get 30 minutes, maybe even an hour, but when else does a young person get the time to purely think about themselves, their current situations and plan effectively on the direction they would like to travel? Coaching provides an uninterrupted space where they can make decisions without being 'told' what to do.

## **Behaviours**

I'm not just talking about disengaged learners here. Of course, coaching can work on improving this, but what about supporting daily habits and routines. Personal leadership behaviours which can drive their achievement and career opportunities. Coaching can be used to can help explore confidence, relationships, kindness and social pressures.

## **Skills**

Too many to list here but young people are often told how to prioritise and organise their time, told how to present and how to be confident.

What if they had time to explore their own ideas to develop their skills? The level of empowerment and impact suddenly shifts to real learning and life changing results.

## **Wellness**

Coaching can be used well here. It can help them dig deep to explore limiting beliefs, thoughts and anxieties which hold them back. Supporting a change of mindset can really help them in overcoming challenges and discover new ways of thinking. Its important also that they consider the balance of academic pressures and ensure they are taking time to consider their wellbeing, to take positive action to help things improve.

## **Challenge**

Young people love challenge. They also thrive when being held to account on their own actions and goals which they set. It's targets and goals which are often placed on them, without consultation which they don't enjoy. Coaching provides support and permission for them to leave their comfort zone. It's a positive process and can quickly shift mindset and aspirations through personal reflection and future focused support.

Young people are well versed with target grades, feedback and how to make progress, but this isn't enough, and won't build strong, stable learners and leaders for the future. Their character, skills and beliefs need to be challenged, developed and worked on, as much as their numeracy and literacy skills. Coaching

provides a space for this. It gives ownership and allows for bespoke, challenging goals to be addressed and monitored.

If you're not coaching your young people, try it, play with it, laugh with it and learn with it - coaching works!

# Mentoring in sports coaching: A reciprocal learning endeavour

*A Research Working Paper by Tom Leeder and Darren Moss*

## Abstract

The advantages to sports coaches engaged in positive mentoring relationships would seem plentiful, with accelerated career growth, increased confidence and self-esteem, along with enhanced reflective skills seen as contributing factors to mentoring's positive discourse (Purdy, 2018). However, an overt focus on mentee learning through practice might be problematic, as the mentor is seemingly disregarded whilst their professional development through mentoring is often ignored. Consequently, this working paper reports on the learning and 'benefits' gained by being a sports coach mentor through utilising the concept of 'educative mentoring' (Langdon & Ward, 2015; Trevethan & Sandretto, 2017). This paper reports on data collected as part of a doctoral study which explores the learning and development of coach mentors employed by the Football Association (FA) on their formal FA Coach Mentor Programme. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 18 FA Coach Mentors (FACMs), with questions centred on the process of 'becoming' a mentor by exploring key influences on mentor learning. Findings revealed that the mentoring process was seen as a reciprocal learning endeavour, with FA Coach Mentors suggesting they were able to acquire coaching specific knowledge from their mentees through

*developing collaborative relationships. In addition, mentoring was considered to be a 'humbling' and rewarding experience, with mentors striving hard to break down traditional conceptualisations of mentor as expert and mentee as novice. Sports organisations administering formalised mentoring programmes could attempt to educate both mentors and mentees on how mentoring can be re-conceptualised – with both parties made aware of the contextualised and meaningful learning available.*

## Introduction

Formal coach education courses have remained the traditional development mechanism for sports coaches. In reality, coaches spend the majority of their time practically coaching in comparison to the amount of time attending certification programmes. Therefore, the need to support coaches at the 'coalface' is becoming more crucial, with it being argued clear benefits exist when adopting a formalised one-to-one, non-judgmental support mechanism that can benchmark experiential change and allow tangible developments to be discussed and reflected upon.

Traditional conceptualisations of mentoring places the mentor as the unprecedented master and the mentee as the apprentice. However, many coaches' experiences are subjective in nature and only become useful to the learner when meaning is attached to the process (Cushion et al. 2003). Consequently, just because a mentor may be perceived as more qualified and experienced, there is no guarantee the connection will be fruitful. The information and context must resonate with the mentee - specifically the what, why, and how. The power of a supportive yet critical friend as a mentor should not be underestimated, where mentoring is a reciprocal two way process via observations, informal discussions and reflections.

### **Educative mentoring**

For many mentors within formalised provision there is not an obligation to 'learn' from their mentees (Trevethan & Sandretto, 2017). Nonetheless, through adopting what has been termed an 'educative' stance, mentors are said to reap numerous rewards from the mentoring process, with possibilities for learning available on both sides of the dyad. When mentors abandon the assumption that mentoring is an expert-novice relationship and begin to adopt a

critically reflective and co-inquirer stance, an educative model emerges.

Within an educative model reflection, questioning, and problematising are seen as normal practices, where mentors and mentees work collaboratively to co-construct knowledge and enable reciprocal learning to transpire (Langdon & Ward, 2015). For mentors, an educative model is likely to enhance the amount of 'benefits' accrued from being positioned within a mentoring role. For example, the process of 'being' a mentor is regularly considered a form of professional development for teachers (Hudson, 2013). Therefore, through enacting a mentoring role a teacher or coach may acquire new ideas within their field, increase their levels of reflection, and ultimately see changes in their practice occurring (Smith & Nadelson, 2016). Moreover, enhanced interpersonal, communication, and leadership skills are said to develop through mentoring practice, whilst pedagogical knowledge may also increase over time (Hudson, 2013).

It would seem educative mentoring and its associated concepts has produced a growing literature base over recent years. With this in mind, this working paper seeks to open the door of educative mentoring to the sports coaching field, by exploring the learning acquired and benefits gained to

sports coaches when transitioning into mentoring roles.

## **Context**

The FA Coach Mentor Programme offers on ground support to coaches with a view of improving the standard of coaching at the grassroots level. The programme was piloted in 2013 as the FA Club Mentor Programme; where 59 FA Club Mentors were placed in FA Community Charter Standard Clubs to support coaches on the ground. Five years later, the FA Coach Mentor Programme operates with over 300 mentors supporting clubs, coaches, leagues and projects across England with roughly 10,000 coaches receiving support on the ground. The FA Coach Mentors (FACMs) are managed by 8 Regional Coach Mentor Officers (RCMO's). Recruitment is via an open application process in conjunction with each County Football Association where the mentors will be placed. The application process has highlighted the broad and eclectic backgrounds of the potential mentor team. Along with formal coaching qualifications and experiences, many applicants bring a wealth of knowledge from such fields as education (teaching/lecturing), the services; police/armed forces and also the business sector. Many of these important work and life skills complement and

transfer directly into their coach mentor roles.

## **Methodology**

A case study design was adopted, where FACMs were used as the case to explore the broader issue of mentor learning and development within sports coaching. Semi-structured interviews were the predominant data collection method, with 9 interviews conducted with 'current' FACMs (i.e. employed for a minimum of one year). Moreover, 9 'new' FACMs were interviewed at the beginning and end of their first year of employment. Due to its theoretical flexibility, interview transcripts were analysed thematically, following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase model. Consequently, the data collection and analysis procedures allowed us to examine in more detail the potential benefits and learning acquired by FACMs through the mentoring of sports coaches.

## **Discussion**

The sports coaching literature has frequently suggested mentoring, whether formal or informal, has numerous benefits for sports coaches operating in local to high performance contexts. Having access to a mentor provides individuals with the opportunity to share, discuss, and acquire



new ideas which they can look to implement in order to alter their current coaching practice. Nevertheless, work by Simpson et al. (2007) has articulated how through the mentoring process, mentors also have access to 'technical' outcomes they might adapt and use in their practice. Within our research we found this to be the case, with many FACMs openly discussing how gaining new ideas and approaches to coaching was a beneficial outcome of being a mentor.

*When you are actually a mentor you are still learning stuff, there are some good coaches out there, and you can learn bits off them, and you are always bouncing ideas off other coaches as well. So, I find that an enjoyable part. Sometimes you find a unique way a coach approaches a subject and you think 'that's pretty good. I can use that, or I can advise other coaches to have a go at that' (Current mentor).*

*A great way to network with people, with coaches of all different ages and experiences, and qualifications, and share ideas of best practice with people, which you know it improves me I think as a mentor but also as a coach as well interestingly... You'll always take something from it... some of the discussions you have are great, and when you think about them on the journey home you just think 'wow'. That's changed the way I deliver something as a coach or even as a mentor going forward (New mentor).*

In addition to gaining new 'technical' knowledge, mentors highlighted the importance of looking at their mentees as more than just 'coaches' and appreciating their wider backgrounds and interests. Mentors recognised the vast arrange of personal life experiences each mentee had accumulated and through reflection, began to suggest these were a valuable source of learning.

*They bring massive life skills from where they work and that's a transferable thing for me, you come across some very interesting people who have got some very interesting backgrounds and experiences... As a mentor you will go and deal with a mentee on a football specific basis but as a larger than life situation that person has a massive amount of experience to bring to the table... that can rub off on you as mentor and you can then take that on board (Current mentor).*

Taking a holistic approach to mentoring and viewing the mentees as more than amateur or learning 'coaches' resonates well with an educative model of mentoring. Our research demonstrates that some mentors actively view the mentoring relationship as a reciprocal learning endeavour and attempted to move beyond the expert-novice conceptualisation and re-educate their mentees to perceive mentoring as a collaborative process

(Langdon & Ward, 2015; Trevethan & Sandretto, 2017).

*Of course I will look to impart or share knowledge but I hope that's a two-way process and that we can talk about things and I will certainly pick up information from the mentee and I would hope that they will gain likewise knowledge and experience from me. It's a sharing process (Current mentor).*

*The perception is that you work for the FA, you must know your stuff type thing. For me I've been trying to tell them 'look I don't know everything'. I will probably learn things by observing their coaching session, as they will by me providing them feedback. By making them sort of understand that it's a two-way relationship (New mentor).*

Consequently, the perception that mentees are individuals who are 'in need' was perceived by some mentors to be problematic. Within an educative model, mentors must assume the role of critically reflective facilitators and cannot simply rely on information transmission as a means of stimulating successful relationships (Langdon & Ward, 2015). Thus, some mentors found the experience of working co-constructively with likeminded and passionate coaches to be a humbling and rewarding process.

*Perhaps to start with I'm not giving them enough credit. "You're a mentee you need help. Right I'm here to help you." Hang on, these are capable people who function in the outside world and they have a passion for sport because they wouldn't be involved otherwise... there are some who do it because they love seeing, you know, players develop and they want to help. So that for me has been quite humbling. So watching and observing those coaches interact with their players and understanding how they have got a deeper connection with those individuals (New mentor).*

Seemingly, those mentors who have been able to establish and adopt an educative model (whether intentionally or not) have reported numerous benefits from their involvement in a formalised mentoring programme. In short, the findings from our research have echoed those more broadly within the field of education (e.g. Hudson, 2013; Smith & Nadelson, 2016).

## Conclusion

Educative mentoring is underpinned by a collaborative and shared approach, where power differentials are negotiated and knowledge is co-constructed (Trevethan & Sandretto, 2017). Within our research, it would appear some FACMs embodied such a perspective, which ultimately transpired in them acquiring new coaching specific knowledge and developing as

professionals. Nonetheless, such an educative stance takes time to develop and perfect. Some mentors may already possess the requisite dispositions, whilst others might not. This was evident within our data, where some mentors seem unaware or unsure of what learning and professional development opportunities are available to them through 'being' a mentor. Whilst many of the FACMs are conscious of the positive impact they are having on coaches, and in turn, the impact their mentees are having on them, quantifying this and transferring it tangibly into further opportunities to develop both their understanding and mentoring practice is where support is needed.

With this in mind, a process of re-education for both mentors and mentees may be required and considered a pivotal part of the initial induction to any formalised mentoring programme. Specifically within the sports coaching field, any sports organisation wishing to deliver and implement a coach mentoring programme may wish to make both mentors and mentees aware of the profound learning potential available within an educative model. Despite time constraints, if mentors and mentees agree at the initiation of the mentoring relationship to commit to a co-inquiring and reciprocal stance, the possibilities for meaningful and collaborative learning are increased (Langdon & Ward, 2015).

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# The Women Leading in Education coaching pledge

## *A Thinkpiece working paper by Carly Waterman*

Quietly and without great fanfare, female educators across the country are taking on leadership roles and making confident, deliberate career decisions. You could argue they always have done, but for me, something has changed. There is a sense of agency where previously there was a sense of powerlessness. There are powerful formal and informal networks that are interlocking, gathering strength and providing scaffolds. If you are a female educator, aspiring to leadership, now is an exciting time.

The Women Leading in Education coaching pledge is part of that change. Launched in 2016, the DfE ambitiously promised to match 1000 coaches with 1000 coachees by International Women's Day in March 2017. After a successful pilot and the advantage of having the virtuous aim of addressing the gender imbalance in school leadership, the pledge appeared full of potential.

By the end of 2016, the pledge was attracting public criticism for low take-up, poor infrastructure and poor communication. Handed over to the

Teaching School Council in 2017 and run from regional hubs, the pledge rumbled on, slowly reaching out to aspiring female leaders albeit in rather a sporadic and arbitrary way.

Prominent voices from networks of female leaders expressed dismay at the deficits in the strategy: The coaches were expected to give their time for free; there was (and still is) no countrywide method for matching coaches with coachees; regional training for coaches was hit and miss. Schoolsweek ran articles in 2016 and 2017 reporting sign-up targets that hadn't been met and quoting female leaders saying it was a 'tick-box exercise' and 'tokenistic.'

The criticisms were valid, and remain so. To this day there are coaches who have been signed up and never contacted. There are others who have to turn people away. Coachees have to choose a coach from a laughably unwieldy and out of date spreadsheet. There is still no way of knowing who is being coached and by whom. The possibility of gathering any

kind of evaluation of the coaching is, well, impossible.

It's all a bit of a mess. It certainly doesn't sound like the performativity-obsessed, number-crunching, KPI-led DfE with which we are familiar. How does an initiative get injected with hundreds of thousands of pounds with no way of measuring its success? Is this a sign of massive incompetence, or is it perhaps a masterstroke of genius?

Although there is no meaningful, quantifiable way of measuring the impact of the coaching pledge, there is something about that that makes my heart sing. Maybe it's a lack of foresight; but I'm an optimist and I like to think that maybe, just maybe, someone somewhere in the DfE way back in 2015 or 2016 understood what coaching truly is and spoke out against making the unmeasurable, measurable; someone who advocated the investment in female leaders for its own sake, and took a stand against the all-pervading performativity agenda currently blighting education. I can hear you laughing.

Delusional I may be, but there is something special about the coaching pledge that gets lost amidst the criticisms.

The narrative has softened in a way that suggests this is an initiative that is, finally, gaining ground. This is in no small part due to the support of #WomenEd, the grassroots movement of educators representing and supporting women into leadership. The support is not part of a formal arrangement, it is simply a result of collective will; a shared sense that we are all striving for the same ultimate goal: gender equality in leadership. Augmented by formal networks such as Women Leading in Education (WLIE) and Teaching School Alliances, the pledge is operating above and beyond the spreadsheet; existing instead in the realm of personal narratives.

The voices of women transformed by coaching are trickling through, like rivulets of a dusk tide meandering into shore. They are stories that, if you listen carefully, whisper of other, similar experiences going on up and down the country. They are stories of personal journeys, of intimate reflections on inner strength and capacity, of the confidential relationship between one's past and one's future. Stories are powerful; they have a ripple effect. You gain, then you give. What starts as a murmur becomes a roar. Talk to people who have benefitted from coaching; they're not just advocates, they're evangelists.

Stories, powerful though they are, cannot be measured in the traditional sense, but they should be captured. These stories are part of the ethnographic tradition; they reveal inner-worlds through authentic voices and lived experiences. They are not the stuff of spreadsheets, they are the stuff of dreams. I feel privileged through my role with two WLIE hubs to have been the beneficiary of these stories and insights; they have illuminated for me the transformational power of coaching. It cannot be over-exaggerated, and my words on this page do not do it justice. Coaching has changed lives. It has saved lives. It continues, day by day, to elevate women not only into leadership, but into new realms of confidence and fulfilment. I have heard stories of impact that have moved me beyond words.

What will be the legacy of the DfE's coaching pledge? Will it fade away in 2019

and be consigned to history as another expensive mistake? Will we lament the lack of communication, clarity and consistency, and muse wistfully of how successful it might have been? Will we say, misty-eyed, that this could have been a victory in the on-going battle for gender equality?

In many quarters, probably yes. But in my quarter, definitely not. I've heard all the arguments for it being a poorly-conceived project with irreconcilable logistical potholes, but I refuse to concede defeat so easily. For me, it's all about the metric by which we measure success. Against all known metrics in education, the coaching pledge will be deemed a failure; but against the metric of human connection (which doesn't have quantifiable units as far as I'm aware) I will be celebrating it as a triumph.

For more information about the Women Leading in Education coaching pledge, visit

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/women-leading-in-education-become-a-coach>

To join the coaching pledge as a coach or coachee visit <https://www.ts council.org.uk/women-leading-in-education-coaching-pledge/>

Find your local Women Leading in Education hub here <https://www.ts council.org.uk/wle-local-networks/>

Be part of the movement that everyone is talking about <http://www.womened.org/>

@WomenEd

# Teacher Rounds – an alternative form of professional learning

*A Research and Practice Insight Working Paper (a tale told in two parts) by  
Kenny Frederick (researcher) and Clare Benton (research participant)*

## Abstract

In a climate where teachers' response to traditional CPD and feedback from formal observations is often "passive" (Danielson, 2009, p.4), I argue that Teacher Rounds (Del Prete 2013) are an innovative form of professional learning where teachers can take ownership of learning from each other. The Teacher Round protocols ensure a safe environment for teachers to work together in a collaborative way. The Teacher Rounds' protocols ensure teachers develop a language to talk about teaching and learning, learn how to ask searching questions and have professional dialogue with each other. Professional learning that takes place in the "authentic world" (Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin, 2011, p.82) of the classroom is far more effective than traditional CPD.

## The Study – what happened when teachers participated in Teacher Rounds?

My research on Teacher Rounds formed my doctoral thesis, which has recently been submitted for examination. The study is primarily a participatory action research

project, which works with teachers rather than on them and takes teacher learning into the context of the classroom. My study involved sixteen teachers in three London schools (two secondary and one primary) who volunteered to participate in setting up and implementing Teacher Rounds using the Round protocols, which included identifying a problem of practice, inviting the Round group into their classrooms, and gathering evidence by noting their observations without attempting to interpret or judge them. Following each Round the group held a detailed post-Round discussion where they reflected on their own practice and the practice they had seen in the classroom. The aim of Teacher Rounds is to provide a practical alternative approach to teacher development where teachers learn from each other.

The emphasis on collegiality and trust amongst Round groups allowed participants to share their reflections and to open themselves up to a type of

scrutiny where they were not judged. Being part of a supportive learning community deepened that trust and encouraged teachers to take risks and to share their innermost thoughts and feelings. It gave them a voice in their own profession. They took ownership of their own learning.

### **What are Teacher Rounds?**

Teacher Rounds are based on the work of Del Prete (2013) and are similar to Instructional Rounds (City et al. 2009). Both are derived originally from the practice observed in teaching hospitals where doctors learn around a hospital bed. There are many variations of Rounds but I chose to concentrate on Teacher Rounds which are a more intimate experience for teachers in one school. Instructional Rounds operate in a number of different schools and are instigated by Principal's and Administrators. In the early days of my studies I went to Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts to meet with Professor Tom Del Prete and his faculty and saw Rounds in action in many of the partner schools that the university links with. This helped me decide on my research and to plan the implementation of Teacher Rounds in the three schools.

### **Power and hierarchies**

As a previous secondary head of some 17 years experience I found my role as a researcher, trainer, facilitator and participant a completely new experience. With no power dynamics at play teachers were very willing to share their thoughts and experiences with me. I was privileged and frankly shocked to hear about the fear and anxiety they experienced by the constant checking and monitoring processes in their schools. The drive for consistency of practice and the fear of Ofsted have led head teachers (me included) to pile on the accountability and audit measures with the hope that it will improve the quality of teaching. It was sobering to learn that it has the opposite effect. Indeed, teachers also said that the typical CPD they receive has an equally negative effect on their practice. Teacher Rounds on the other hand enabled teachers to realize that "there is no one way of teaching". They saw a variety of practice in different parts of the school. The groups were made up of between 5 and 6 teachers with varied experience and there were no experts. They were all equal partners in the learning experience. Nobody told others what to do and the language of 'wonderings' allowed them to ask searching questions. For instance 'I wonder what might have happened if you did..?' Language was very important as Timperley (2010) says teachers find it difficult to talk about teaching. I had to



work hard to get teachers to avoid the usual jargon and get them to be explicit in describing what they had seen and heard in the classrooms they visited.

Professional conversations started to flow and it was difficult to get teachers to stop talking once they started.

### **The importance of Teacher Round Protocols**

The Teacher Round protocols are very important when implementing Rounds. The first of which is agreeing a contract for working together. In all schools teachers decided that confidentiality was the first element to be included. The lack of judgment appeared to free up teachers and allowed them to be open and honest with each other. Teachers told me that when they were being formally observed they 'play the game' and ensure that all boxes are ticked. They don't take chances, yet when participating in Teacher Rounds they took huge risks. The trust (Bryk and Schneider, 2002) group members had in each other allowed them to express their inner most thoughts and doubts and it was obvious that many felt they 'would never be good enough'. Teachers (even the most experienced) were full of self-doubt and full of guilt about not doing enough for their students. Teacher Rounds provided positive feedback without any judgment. They

respected the feedback from their colleagues and took it on board. They had seen each other teach and that teaching was their 'bread and butter'. This was not the case (they felt) with feedback they got from senior leaders.

### **Teacher Rounds as an alternative Professional Learning activity**

Teachers described CPD as 'falling asleep' training where someone told them what they should be doing. Whilst some of the talks might have been interesting teachers rarely put any of the ideas into practice. They said senior managers decided on the staff development programme and they had little say in it. Subsequently they learned little from it. When asked during initial interviews to describe what was the best sort of professional learning to help them improve their practice they said seeing each other teach. However, many pointed to examples of coaching triads they had been part of that lacked any clear protocols, did not build in any time or guidance for follow up discussions and most often the make up of the triads had been decided by the senior leadership team. This led to distrust and suspicion.

Teachers participating in Teacher Rounds reflected on their own practice and went on to make changes in their own classrooms. They agreed a range of

issues and recommendations to pass on to their headteachers, which pulled together their individual learning. Furthermore they set up and facilitated new groups of teachers in participating in Teacher Rounds.

### **My own learning**

My own learning caused me to think about the impact of hierarchies in schools and the unintended consequences of the drive for consistency in schools. It made me think about the lack of trust between teachers and senior leaders. Although one research group included a senior manager, she was someone teachers trusted. She has written a piece on her experience further on in this paper. I looked back on my own experience as a headteacher and had to ask myself what I would do differently now if I were to go back to this role. I came to the conclusion that I would review and revisit the drive for consistency and allow and enable 'maverick teachers' to thrive. I would look again at the performance management culture in our schools and look at the resources expended on checking and monitoring and on CPD. I would then reorganize these resources to enable teachers to collaborate and with each other and to bring professional learning into the classroom through Teacher Rounds.

### **Consistency, compliance or control?**

Lack of trust in schools emerges as a major factor in the way teachers engage in their work. I conclude headteachers need to create a school culture that develops openness and trust between teachers, and between teachers and the senior leadership team. Surveillance, constant monitoring and checking on teachers needs to be urgently addressed and accountability measures need to be rationalized and be more humane. The compliance culture appears to be about control. What are we afraid will happen if we let go of this control? Giving teachers a voice in what and how they teach and involving them in the decision making process in schools will help them to take ownership of the teaching and learning process and allow them to develop their own agency and professionalism (Bietsa et al. 2015). This might help to keep them in the profession.

### **Reflection from one of the participants in the original Teacher Round research: Clare Benton (Deputy Head).**

As a participant in Kenny's Teacher Rounds research I was able to learn about the process first hand. I did not realise it at the time but I was in the unique position of being a teacher and a senior leader in the

school. When teachers (myself included) volunteered to participate they knew this would be a different learning experience that would be non-judgmental and would be confidential. As a senior leader with responsibility for teaching and learning and CPD I was pleased that the group had enough trust in me to be included in the group. Kenny told me later that this was unusual.

Many of the teachers in our group had never had the opportunity to observe a lesson – they had always been on the receiving end and many found the process negative. I was taken aback by the fact that teachers said they did not learn from the formal observation process and I had started to wonder if there was any value in actually doing them.

Getting teachers to talk about teaching was something I have tried very hard to do and the post-Round discussions really opened up the conversations. We had agreed a contract for working together and Kenny had trained us up to use specific language when talking about teaching. We had to forget all the jargon and describe what we saw, heard and felt and we were not to evaluate or make judgments. This took practice.

The trust that developed between the group was very strong and we were able to express our self-doubts and our worries

about our own practice during these discussions. We could all reflect on the Round (the lesson) we had just seen and feedback on the problem of practice identified by the host teacher. This was really important because we all felt in control of what we wanted feedback on. The fact that everybody in the group was there on an equal basis was unique for all of us - there was no hierarchy and we all 'exposed' ourselves by inviting the group into the classroom.

It was really positive to be part of a group that were so supportive of each other. Some of the conversations were not easy as teachers opened up about their anxiety of being observed and about not been good enough but were immediately reassured and uplifted by their colleagues. We all learned not to be so hard on ourselves and that there is no such thing as a perfect teacher. We are all learning.

Finding the time to make Teacher Rounds happen was not always easy and I had to negotiate this with the person who organised cover but it was worth it. Teachers gave up their own time to have the post-Round discussion after school and sometimes they did not want to stop talking.

Personally, I learned lots about my own teaching and about the way teachers learn from collaborating together. The Round

protocols gave us a very different experience and gave us renewed confidence in our own ability. Bringing CPD into the classroom made it a real experience. Getting feedback from colleagues was meaningful and was acted upon. I am now acutely aware that telling teachers how to teach is not a way to improve teaching.

I have now changed schools and have been promoted and have introduced Teacher Rounds into my new school part of our professional development programme.

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# **The National Coaching Symposium 2018: Informing my decision to utilise coaching and mentoring techniques to enhance the research and enquiry being conducted by teachers**

## ***A Thinkpiece Working Paper by Steven Riley***

### **Introduction and Context**

I am the Director of Research for a secondary school in West Yorkshire and will soon embark upon an EdD qualification with a focus on Coaching and Mentoring at Leeds Beckett University and so the National Coaching Symposium 2018 seemed like a perfect starting point for what is, to me, a relatively new endeavour. The conference, designed to empower and engage practitioners from across the education sector in coaching and mentoring methodology and practice, did not disappoint.

A few years ago, I embarked upon a project with the intention of training 'experts' within our school in five key areas of school practice (leadership and management, teaching and learning, data and assessment, personal development and behaviour and welfare). We have invested heavily into research and, since the start of the project, we have sponsored (and are continuing to sponsor) a number of our staff through M-level studies. We

have also partnered with Leeds Beckett University who have allowed all of our 120 teaching staff to sign up with the university in order to grant everyone access to their library and academic resources.

Our goal has been to ensure that, along with our partner schools, we become a research-rich establishment, with all teachers encouraged to conduct and utilise their own research, gather and act upon evidence and engage with relevant enquiry in order to inform and improve their practice. This is starting to occur, with various ongoing initiatives being implemented and potential barriers to the success of our undertakings having been investigated and mitigated. However, we have now reached a stage where more support measures are required to allow our teaching community to develop their proficiency in coordinating and understanding research and enquiry, and with developing our whole-school approach to the delivery of related CPD activities.

It was suggested to me that harnessing a coaching and mentoring culture would be a sensible approach for us to move this project forward effectively. Having attended the symposium, I am more confident than ever that this advice was sound and throughout the rest of this paper I will attempt to explain why.

### **The National Coaching Symposium 2018**

At the start of the conference, there was a distinctly positive atmosphere. Tables were evenly spaced out around a rather sizeable room which began to fill very quickly with education professionals eager for the symposium to commence. Whether standing or seated and awaiting the first speaker to enter the stage, in-depth conversations were already occurring across the floor between like-minded attendees meeting for the first time. Delegates seemed very keen to collaborate and share their experiences of coaching and mentoring and discuss what they expected or hoped to take away from the day. To enhance the experience, the audience was given the chance to collect books about coaching and mentoring from a number of set-up stalls, many of which were being distributed by the authors. This enabled a fantastic opportunity to engage in short but meaningful conversations and add further opportunities for networking

and expanding knowledge and understanding. Being so new to the concept, these were all highly important factors for me and helped to ensure that I knew I was in the right place, for the right reasons.

The day was designed to provide an overview of key strategies that could be explored and developed for a plethora of projects by staff at all levels throughout the education system nationally.

Combining keynote speeches, workshops and networking opportunities, the day was varied but, unfortunately, there wasn't time for delegates to attend all of the workshops that were available on the day. Although I thoroughly enjoyed all of the addresses I saw, including inspirational talks by Viv Grant, Professor David Clutterbuck and Andy Buck, the areas of the symposium that were most relevant to my research investigations came from the workshops hosted by Professor Christian van Nieuwerburgh of the University of East London and Professor Rachel Lofthouse of Leeds Beckett University.

In addition to observing Professor van Nieuwerburgh's opening address for the whole event, I was also in attendance at his inspirational and informative workshop,

which started with a question: What is coaching?

A short awkward silence later, it was broadly explained as being a managed conversation between two people on a one-to-one basis where both people 'grow', bringing about sustained and sustainable change to behaviours or ways of thinking and acknowledged to be about learning development and growth.

Used as a tool to help to ensure that the educational practices of teachers are being informed by relevant and up to date research and enquiry, coaching could be key. The reason for research is to answer questions that emerge from practice. The research should then inform theories or vice versa and is pointless unless it has an impact on practice. Professor van Nieuwerburgh was making a clear link in his workshop between coaching and research and went on to explain key areas where coaching is having an impact on 'Educational Environments' through 'Coaching Culture', which included:

- Enhanced student experiences
- Improved educational leadership
- Enriched professional practice (in particular: teaching – pedagogy/andragogy)

Two proven ways of working were explained:

- **Dialogical teaching:** Instruction through dialogue. Teachers who are good at practice working with other teachers, in a coaching relationship – the coachee still makes the decisions but there is a potential for a transfer of information
- **Facilitative Coaching:** The teachers know what they need to do and have their own answers and can work together. The coach acts as a critical friend – asking questions to help the coachee to develop their understanding through reflection – no transfer of information is taking place from an 'expert'

Understanding and being able to utilise both of these approaches will be highly useful when attempting to adopt a coaching culture within my school. Before my experience of the symposium, I was thinking of ways in which a culture change could be 'created'. However, the overwhelming feeling that I obtained from the conversations that ensued within this workshop, and others from the day, was that the focus of schools shouldn't be to embed 'coaching cultures', it should be about 'learning' and 'developing'. However, if coaching is used to do that more effectively then the culture shift could well be an accidental (and welcomed) outcome.

There are many studies (particularly from Australia and USA) that show that providing coaching for teachers around their teaching practice can lead to very desirable improvements, including:

- Embedding CPD: Research isn't encouraging about 'one-off' training days, which rarely transform practice.
- Implementing a new initiative – implementation rates are very poor (something like 14% do 'the thing' that was discussed in 'training'. Adding coaching to the same training transforms implementation rates to above 80%, according to certain studies.
- How we make decisions?
  - o If we use coaching conversations about professional practice, you start to raise awareness about how to have productive conversations.
  - o It's not only about 'what went badly', etc.

There was also some time in this workshop for members of the audience, many of whom who had previous experience in coaching and mentoring, to contribute their own ideas and advice about the implementation of strategies. Below, I have attempted to summarise some of the comments made:

#### *Advice and comments from practitioners*

- Little and often – impact: immediate change
- Immediate impact – coaching culture causes a system whereby 'training' is provided at the point of need instead of a blanket 'one fits all' approach, which may not be relevant to practitioners
- Students learning from observing the people around them. If the teachers, educators, leaders etc. are interested in their own development, this is a great message to send out
- Time – not having enough time was the most common issue reported but having too much could also prove to be an issue. Concluded advice was not to take teachers away from the classroom for too long and to ensure that the conversations between practitioners remain productive. *Further investigation required: How much time will be helpful?*
- Research clearly shows that 'buy in' from a senior/leadership team is critical for the success of any coaching programme. Leaders providing time for this sends a very strong message to the organisation.
- One school dedicated a room to coaching – a small gesture with a big impact illustrating the importance placed upon coaching within this particular environment.
- Give staff time to reflect on their own professional practice.
- Principle of choice: Take this to staff when they are ready for it. If you give time when other pressures are present, it may not be



appreciated. Making things available and saying 'you tell me how much time you need' etc.

- Continual – coaching should happen all the time (coaching culture)
- Every educator has to act as a role-model, valuing self-development and acting upon feedback.

I gained a vast amount of knowledge, understanding and motivation from this first workshop. The second, hosted by Professor Lofthouse, was very different in style but equally as thought-provoking and essential to helping me to develop my understanding of coaching and mentoring. During this second workshop, along with my fellow audience members, I was able to practice some coaching techniques that had been outlined early in the session. Having the opportunity to discuss how I thought coaching and mentoring could be usefully embedded into a school setting was really beneficial, especially whilst being 'coached' through the use of strategic questioning from a partner. This forced me to take a self-evaluative approach and steered the conversation in a direction that may not have otherwise been explored if I had simply been required to give a monologue on the matter. It was precisely this dialogical process that highlighted to me the potential power that a coaching conversation could have and reiterated

much of what had been discussed in the previous key-notes and workshop that I had attended.

Using a similar style of questioning, I was then able to act as a coach as the process was reversed. Having never really engaged in this very specific style of conversation before, it was initially a little daunting, but it soon became clear that with practice, influential discussions could easily take place between two people. It also transpired that coaches do not have to be experts on the topics discussed, but just need to be aware of the techniques that can be utilised to help to extract the most useful information that may enable a 'coachee' to improve their ability to self-evaluate and in turn, develop their practice. I was immediately able to make a connection with this experience and the information referenced by Professor van Nieuwerburgh, in the first workshop that I was in, about the 'facilitative coaching' style.

As well as this highly useful activity, Professor Lofthouse shared some fascinating theories. Amongst these were 'coaching as a 'site' of practice', from the Theory of Practice Architecture by Stephen Kemmis. This theory includes information about three 'spaces' relating to coaching:

- ‘Doings’ (Physical/Temporal ‘Space’) – what activities occur and the nature of the surroundings and activities where the conversations are taking place
- ‘Sayings’ (Semantic ‘Space’) – what is said and written, the vital communication aspect of coaching and the nature of how this is utilised
- ‘Relatings’ (Social ‘Space’) – how individuals relate and connect with each other and how individuals feel in a social space

Understanding these key elements will be an essential driver in the success of future strategies that I will attempt to embed. The way in which strategies are designed and implemented will be vital, but it will be crucial for me to understand the perceptions of our staff and not try to ‘force’ something that is getting resistance, or at least work to understand why that resistance might be there.

### **Conclusions and next steps**

Throughout the day, there was a recurring emphasis from multiple sources on the importance of ensuring that teachers do not ‘get in the way’ of the coaching. I do not foresee that my role will be to ‘embed’

a new ‘coaching culture’ and it is clear that my colleagues will need to be in a position to embrace changes and see what we are doing as an ‘opportunity’, as opposed to an ‘implementation’.

At other points during the conference, we were encouraged to pose ourselves specific questions to answer. My main question resulting from the day was: *Can we effectively marry a coaching culture into an environment of forced performance management?* I will, of course, be conducting more research into this area but I am optimistic, at least in my own school, that a coaching and mentoring approach will have positive and lasting effects that will change the way our CPD is conducted and the way that our staff feel about their own personal development. According to Professor Clutterbuck, there are specific points that may help a practitioner to consider whether or not the desired coaching culture has been successfully fostered within an establishment. For me, this means at a pivotal time in the future I will be required to critically evaluate key aspects of practice, such as:

- Are staff displaying personal growth?
- Are staff engaging in constructive and positive challenges?
- Do staff welcome feedback?

- Do staff take a joint responsibility for their development and the development of others?
- Is there a good understanding at all levels about what effective coaches and coachees do?
- Are developments and strategies being seen as opportunities rather than interventions?
- Are people recognised and rewarded for sharing knowledge?
- Is time for reflection given and valued?

I mentioned within my introduction that I was certain that my plans to introduce 'research and enquiry' techniques, with which all practitioners could engage within my school, would be greatly enhanced by implementing and integrating coaching and mentoring techniques. Towards the end of the first workshop that I attended, Professor van Nieuwerburgh finished by explaining some fundamental and widely regarded realities about coaching. According to him, learning to be a coach or mentor is one of the most effective ways of enabling teachers and leaders to become good and outstanding practitioners. They learn to be a coach and organically become better teachers and leaders. Having training about coaching teaches you about asking better

questions, listening more, believing in other people and yourself. For me, fostering a coaching culture to facilitate conversations about research and enquiry with which practitioners are engaging can only enhance the learning and development that will be occurring, providing that staff across the organisation are willing to embrace the changes and opportunities that are being integrated.

Professor Clutterbuck said in his keynote that *all coaching goals should be to make the coach obsolete*. This will be one of my future goals and, if achieved, will mean that I will have arrived at my desired outcome and that the culture change will have been effective.

There is some way to go before I will be in a position to be measuring or even considering such things. However, my attendance at the National Coaching Symposium 2018 has given me confidence that I am on the right path and it has given me the enthusiasm and excitement to continue my journey towards utilising coaching and mentoring as a means of enhancing research and enquiry.

# Process Supervision with Senior Leaders in Schools

## *A Practice Insight Working Paper by Lisa Lea-Weston*

### **Introducing Supervision**

Supervision is part of social work and psychology/psychotherapy culture as well as midwifery. It is not part of education culture. Supervision is akin to coaching and mentoring but it goes to another level in that it is not just about the supervisee's professional / personal development or their well-being or role as a leader. It is all of these BUT crucially the initial contract changes the frame for all subsequent conversations. Supervision is defined by Shoet and Hawkins as "...a joint endeavour in which a practitioner (teacher) with the help of a supervisor, attends to their clients (children), themselves as part of their client practitioner relationships and the wider systemic context, and by so doing improves the quality of their work, transforms their client relationships, continuously develops themselves, their practice and the wider profession" (Shoet and Hawkins, 2012). The capacity to be professionally vulnerable is key in supervision and that is why supervision, once a relationship is established, is usually a long- term relationship of some years. As a current supervisee (Assistant Head teacher) said to me, it is like being in

ongoing, bespoke, continued professional development on a 5/6 weekly basis, which is entirely focused on her needs and the needs of the children in her school.

### **Introducing Talking Heads**

Talking Heads is a newly formed, small social enterprise offering external, 1-2-1 supervision to Head Teachers and Senior Leaders in schools and colleges. Talking Heads development is funded by the School for Social Entrepreneurs Start Up programme.

My belief is that Head Teachers/ Senior Leaders are under an intolerable pressure, as are many teachers and teaching assistants. The pressures are the obvious performance related ones, but there is also an increase in expectation to be able to manage the mental health needs of all children, including the most vulnerable in our society. There is a move towards schools being more trauma-informed and whilst these are excellent ideas in principle, the pressure for schools to do this reflects the decline in other services and the reduction in resourcing of schools from the government and social services and Children and Adolescent Mental

Health. This is where supervision comes in.

### **My professional background**

When I trained 18 years ago as a dramatherapist I knew I would be in supervision throughout my career. Engaging in supervision has thus been a constant part of my own professional life, beginning when I worked as a Health Care Professions Council (HCPC) Dramatherapist, and spent 10 years in the NHS as a Clinical Lead working clinically and as a service manager. In that context it was best practice for supervision to be offered outside of the team by someone the supervisee did not connect with in their day to day work and who held no line management responsibility. This supervision was paid for externally for many years. With the reductions in budget this was gradually eroded and more supervision was provided “in house” but across teams in order to maintain some of the elements for best practice. Those of us who were Clinical Leads mostly paid for our external supervision out of choice, as it being impossible to take issues with colleagues or team difficulties to a peer supervisor and for it to feel “safe” to be vulnerable. I have had six supervisors. Two have been long term over several years. The others I was not well suited to or I was given them with no choice. I now

attend supervision on my therapy practice and my supervision.

Talking Heads has emerged because of my work as a dramatherapist working with children with attachment/trauma in their lives, who are inevitably part of education. I have worked with one primary school for the last 5 years as a therapist and have been part of a team that has helped make school the safe space when nothing outside is safe. We have worked together and successfully engaged children in education where elsewhere they may have been excluded if their needs were not met in the same way. This is enormously satisfying, but the schools I have worked with no longer have capacity to fund the work.

I have at times also delivered short term supervisory interventions to support a teacher in their relationship with a Looked After Child. It prevented the teacher going off sick as it enabled her to reflect on the fact that the terrible out of control feelings she was experiencing were in fact the feelings the child was feeling in school. Very traumatised children will try to find out if they are safe with the adults around them. Once this was understood by the class teacher she was able to again access her compassion in the face of the child's challenges.

## **The role of external supervision for school leaders**

External supervision is key to the work of Talking Heads. Both myself and Seonaid Beasley (Associate supervisor) have experience as supervisors and working in or around education but not as teachers. This means we have a good understanding of the issues Head Teachers and Senior Leaders face but we are not enmeshed in the system. It is a relief for all the Senior Educators we work with that this is the case. It is most often the only place, once trust is built, that they are truly able to bring their professional and personal selves. Their unsureness and not knowingness – this is what is brought to supervision most often as it is in these places that the most learning occurs.

Regular supervision becomes anticipated by the supervisee and this itself is holding and an agent for activating processing and

reflection, as the supervisee not only anticipates but in times of difficulty they begin to develop their own internal version of their supervisor. This supports well-being and learning in between sessions.

I am passionate about a change in culture from supervision being taught about and experienced as an option in teacher training to career long experience and it being an “expectation” of senior leaders. There is a level of accountability that is inherent in the definition of supervision but that is because it is NOT something that needs to be feared. Accountability in supervision terms is a deeply ethical process and not the same as the outcome driven processes pushing Heads currently. To be able to reclaim this sense of accountability – our own personal and professional sense is also key to wellbeing at a profound level.

## **Reference**

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# Professional Communities Among Teachers: A Summary of a Conceptual Framework

*A Research Working Paper by James Underwood and  
Marta Kowalczyk-Walędziak*

## Abstract

*This paper is a summary of some key points from a longer article by the same authors to be published shortly in the Polish Journal of Educational Studies.* It presents via an exploration of literature in this area a possible conceptual framework for understanding the professional communities that are built when teachers work together within projects and initiatives that cross workplace and even national boundaries. This paper presents a conceptualisation of three aspects of these professional communities. These are as follows: the ways in which teachers' self-efficacy may be shaped; the perceptions of membership that teachers may have; the types of knowledge shared. The full article that this summary paper is based on conceptualises two further aspects of community building: boundary creation and the role of individuality. This paper's contribution to the wider academic debate is that it can potentially inform empirical research into such communities that is currently taking place, via a wide range of projects, in universities across Europe and beyond. This framework presented here is currently being used by the authors to enable them to understand communities of teachers they are working with.

## Introduction

The purpose of this summary, and of the longer article it is based on, is to provide a suggested conceptual framework for the understanding of professional communities. The article this is based on is a review of two genres of academic literature related to professional communities, these are: formally published academic research, and reports describing projects which have facilitated community building among teachers from different workplaces.

This summary paper is divided into three sections, followed by a conclusion. In the conclusion a diagram illustrating the conceptual framework that the paper builds towards is presented. The three sections are as follows:

- self-efficacy within a professional community.
- conceptualising community membership
- knowledge sharing within communities

## **Self-efficacy within a professional community**

Professional identity is socially constructed and must exist within a social context, usually a workplace. This makes it distinct from self-efficacy as it is built in other contexts, as in these contexts it can potentially be self-constructed in isolation (Chalari, 2017). Our professional identity is also built progressively over the length of our professional career as a whole and the time we have been in a single workplace (Teleshaliyev, 2014).

The behaviour of others within a social context can challenge or strengthen our identity and our self-efficacy (Wenger-Traynor & Wenger-Traynor, 2015). Teachers may retreat into rejection of the community that they are working within if it does not affirm them (Leeferink, Koopman, Beijgaard, et al., 2015), alternatively they may find that membership of a community, including a workplace community, enables them to assert and define themselves in positive ways (Stanley, 2012). In relation to this, whether a teacher's professional values and beliefs are compatible with the community plays an important role in the formation of self-efficacy (Tseng & Kuo, 2014).

There is an assumption in some research, that teachers simply find themselves

working within a less conducive or more conducive community (Fullan, 2016). This is based on the nature of the community that exists within the workplace that they find themselves within. Thereby to follow this through, whether a teacher is part of a more or less conducive community which builds their self-efficacy would be partly or largely a matter of chance (Orr, 2012). However, this seems to be an incomplete model for describing the professional journey of teachers (Joshevska, 2016). Frequently, from a position of integration within the heart of a localised community, teachers seek further challenges and participate in related but alternative communities that give them new experiences and new sources of inspiration (Frost, 2014).

Three concepts that therefore may present one aspect of a useful framework for understanding professional communities are as follows: (1) the presence or otherwise of affirming professional conversations and interactions within a community; (2) the role of accumulated affirmation over-time and the impact of this when moving towards a more central position in a community; (3) the possibility that teachers join and create communities in exploratory and pro-active ways whereby they deliberately seek and create conducive communities outside the workplace.



## Conceptualising community membership

Different types of professional community have different forms of membership from very tightly defined groups working closely together such as teachers developing lessons together in the Japanese system of lesson study to loosely bonded groups such as an international community of teachers, perhaps linked by a project in some way. These differing structures present different challenges in terms of recognising membership.

One issue faced by the more tightly knit form of community is that there may be tension between the building of community and valuing individualism (Saito & Atencio, 2015). Some good teachers define themselves in individual terms (Pedder & Opfer, 2013) and they may reject or place less significance on communities that put pressure on them to be collegial within pre-defined structures (Frost, 2015). Membership of such communities may be recognised without being valued. On the other hand, the potential membership of an international community of teachers, linked by some large-scale projects, may be so large and amorphous that it can be hard for a teacher to perceive it as a community at all (Santoro, 2014). One challenge for any form of community building, that is beyond the workplace, lies

in ensuring its relevance in teachers' professional lives (Dogan, Pringle and Mesa, 2016).

Teachers are also members of some communities in a factual rather than an affective way. These factual memberships are acknowledged by them but are not interpreted into their identity. Research into the relevance of union membership for teachers in the United Kingdom where union membership is nearly universal indicates that there are teachers who identify as political activists and for whom such membership is an active form of self-identification. However, there are many others for whom it can be defined as a known fact but one that has no impact on their self-perception (Popiel, 2013).

For teachers who choose to join communities beyond the workplace, it may be that working together collegially within a loose structure away from the normal structures of a school may enable creativity without containing the same potential threats to a teacher's individual self-efficacy (Joshevska & Kirandziska, 2017). Such communities may enable the teacher who has chosen for valid ethical and professional reasons to tread a more individualistic path within an institution to build collegiality within another aspect of their professional life (Frost, 2015). It may also enable those teachers who do not

define themselves in individualistic ways but for whom the structures they work within promote isolation to perceive themselves as part of a community that they value and that they perceive to value them.

A possible typology of community membership that could be used to understand different professional communities could be: (1) factually acknowledged but professionally insignificant communities, (2) communities that provide affirmation, (3) communities that develop practice, (4) tightly bounded and pre-structured communities, such as a work place, (5) more loosely bonded communities that exist outside the workplace, membership of which may create space for flexibility and creativity. These may of course overlap and interact.

### **Knowledge sharing within communities**

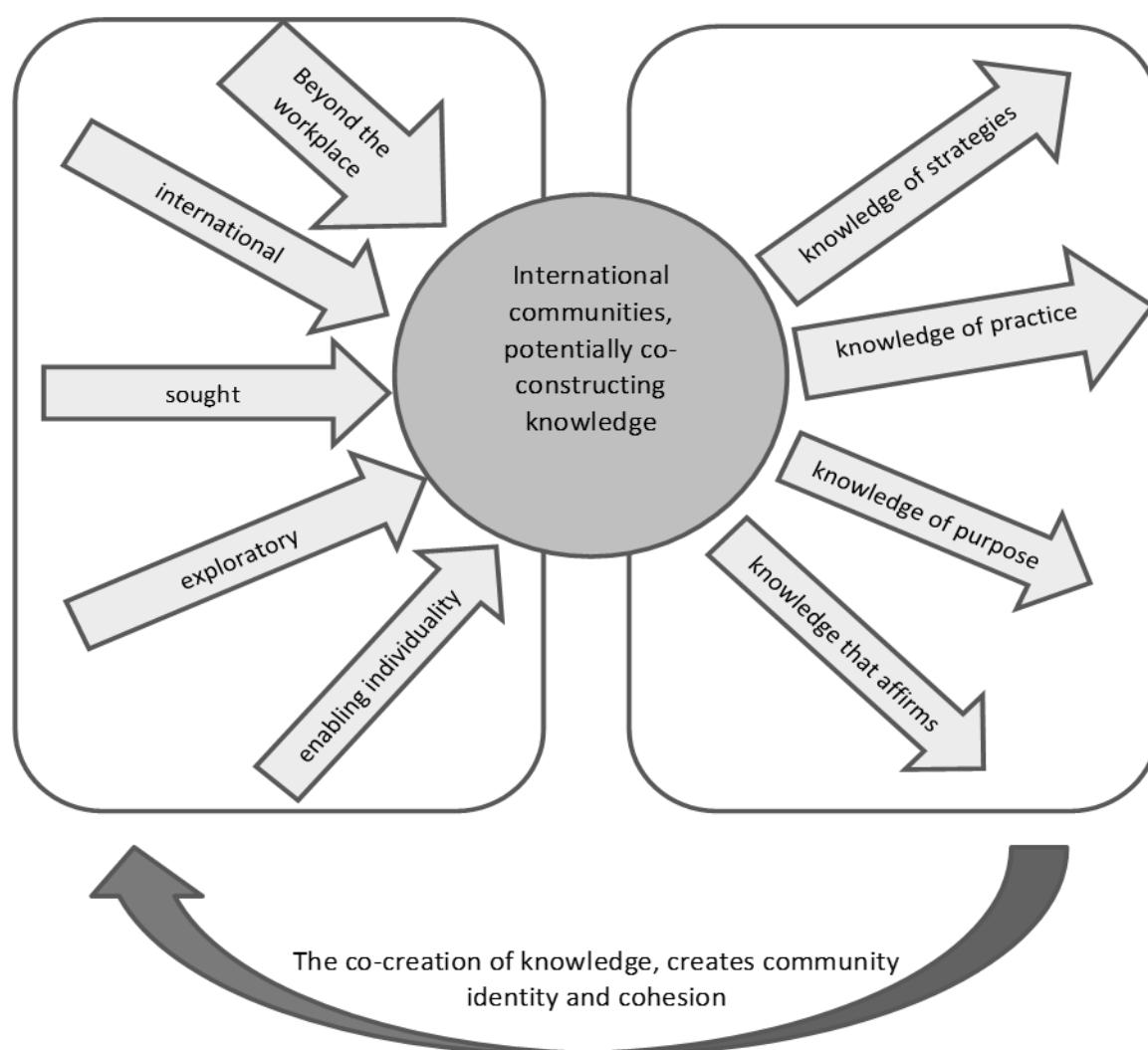
An exploration into one community of teachers who were involved in a project that crossed national boundaries conducted between 2010-2017 built a typology of four types of knowledge that

may be shared within a professional community (Underwood, 2017). These were as follows (1) knowledge of strategies, this is sharing specific and concrete classroom actions such as lesson plans or activities, (2) knowledge of practice, this refers to approaches to planning and designing lessons rather than specific classroom activities, (3) knowledge of values, this refers to pedagogical, ethical or cultural values that underpin the process of lesson design, (4) knowledge that affirms, which is knowing that one is a skilled professional gained from interaction with an audience of fellow professionals. These forms of knowledge were also found to be present in a range of reports on communities that linked teachers in projects outside the workplace (Teleshaliyev, 2014; Joshevskva, 2016). All of these forms of knowledge were present in the discourse between teachers and in stories that teachers told about teaching. It seems therefore that when teachers engage in discussions about teaching that they share forms of knowledge beyond just teaching strategies. These other types of knowledge may even be valued more.

Diagram illustrating a conceptual framework for understanding communities of teachers

Community characteristics

The knowledge created



In conclusion we have presented this diagram, above. At the heart of this diagram lies: significant communities co-constructing knowledge. Feeding into this are those characteristics that teachers may be seeking when they become involved in alternative communities. Flowing out of this community are the forms of knowledge that such a

community may generate and that may be present in the discourse between teachers. The further long arrow at the bottom of the diagram, curving back, illustrates how this process of sharing knowledge may be both an outcome of community engagement and a creator of community identity and cohesion.

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# BELMAS Conference 2018 – the links to coaching and mentoring in educational leadership

## *A Thinkpiece Working Paper by Deborah Outhwaite*

The British Educational Leadership, Management and Administration Society ([www.BELMAS.org.uk](http://www.BELMAS.org.uk)) is an independent voice supporting quality education through effective leadership and management. It is a unique organisation of practitioners, academics and other representatives of all sectors of education. We have Research Interest Groups (RIGs) in a wide range of areas including Leadership Preparation and Development; Reflective Practice; and Structural Reform among many others. Many of those active in BELMAS are mentors and coaches as part of our normal day-to-day practice, and so we are keen to see where the links are from our annual conference on the latest research put forward into mentoring and coaching internationally.

BELMAS annual conferences are not huge when you consider that the American Educational Research Association (AERA) has around 15,000 delegates and the British equivalent BERA lasts for a working week. But every year BELMAS annual conference has around 300 people attend from the UK and across the globe, for a Friday to a Sunday lunchtime, so that educational researchers

in leadership get a chance to meet with leaders in education. Often it is the leader's themselves presenting their research from their professional work, but the conference also allows for much networking between the two groups. Keynotes always have an international flavour too.

Our BELMAS 2018 conference (<https://www.belmas.org.uk/Annual-Conference-2018>) held many sessions related to mentoring and coaching, many of which I attended and this year's theme of ***'Education Policy and Sustainability: global perspectives from the field of educational leadership'***, really helped the M&C presentations as we are all well-aware of the links between sustainability and mentoring and coaching. Here, in England, many of us in education feel that it is – in part, at least – older members of staff leaving education, and their experience being lost to the system, but crucially to the individuals within in it, that is leading us to a position in which we fail to keep our younger staff, as the more informal mentoring schemes in schools have gone by the wayside over the years.

**Dr Christine Callender's**,  
[@ChrisCall6189] (UCL) research on  
***'Eldership', Sustainability and the BME  
School Leader Pipeline in England?***,  
was a very interesting summary of a  
qualitative research project that used  
interviews and focus group discussions to  
interrogate the personal stories and  
settings, creating vignettes of eldership  
practice, and to produce outline narratives  
of aspirant, newly appointed, established  
and recently retired BAME leaders. This  
style of research avoids the dangers of  
homogenizing BME school leaders and  
draws attention to the diversity within and  
across the study participants.

**Dr Pauline Stonehouse**  
[@UNDSymposium] and **Dr. Jared  
Schlenker's** [@jaredschlenker] (UND)  
research on ***'Principal mentoring: A  
sustainable program?'*** was part of a  
trilogy of presentations from Stonehouse  
and her colleagues, at the conference,  
that focused on the context of recent US  
policy change in educational leadership,  
with the advent of Trump. Despite  
opportunities for field experience that exist  
in North Dakota for would-be principals  
and head teachers, these staff often  
experience challenges in adjusting to the  
demands of school leadership.  
Mentorships are designed to provide  
professional support for those transitioning  
from graduate study into administrative

roles. The authors shared their findings  
from a three-year qualitative study  
examining the mentor and mentee  
participants in a newly established  
statewide principal mentorship program.  
Previously unavailable connections  
between new principals assigned to  
experienced administrators allowed faculty  
development for both. A shortage of  
administrators had inspired agency  
support for mentoring as a means to  
educate and retain school principals  
particularly in smaller, rural communities.

***'Collaborative approaches to leading  
teaching and learning'*** were put forward  
by **Paul Campbell** [@PCampbell91]  
(primary teacher and Glasgow Ed.D  
student) and **Rehana Shanks**  
[@rehanashanks] (head teacher, and the  
new BELMAS Chair) in a Roundtable  
session on perspectives on the forms,  
opportunities and challenges of  
collaboration to lead teaching and learning  
in Early Years and Primary settings. The  
pair drew on research into the concept of  
collaboration and the relationship it has to  
tackling educational challenges with a  
particular focus on education in Scotland.  
This raised a good discussion among  
those present on key themes in  
application to leading and sustaining  
change in teaching and learning in primary  
education not just in Scotland but across  
the UK, and further afield.

**Dr Domini Bingham** [@DomimiBingham] (UCL) presented a really interesting paper on aging and professional learning entitled ***‘Sustaining and developing extended working lives – understandings and perceptions from one UK higher education workplace’***, where she discussed the phenomena of extended working lives through rising life expectancy, the lifting of the default retirement age in many countries, the skills gap and increasing numbers of older workers forcing education organizations to consider the implications on the role and place of older workers, their engagement and professional needs. Presenting a summary of her Ed.D thesis her study discussed what is valued by older professional staff and management in regard to learning and professional development and the implications of what is valued.

***‘Recruiting head teachers in Wales for a new era of professional collegiality’***

was a very interesting presentation by **Emmajane Milton** [@EmmajaneMilton1] and her colleagues (Cardiff and Aberystwyth) in which they analysed the challenging climate for head teacher recruitment in Wales. They explored the move from a techno-rational model of ‘lone hero’ in hierarchical organizational structures through to a networked approach that positions a head teacher as an ‘educative mentor’, that views leaders as learners themselves who are focused on leading the leadership and learning of others. Suggestions were made by the team for schools, governing bodies, local authorities and other stakeholders involved in selecting potential candidates for Headship in an era in Wales where policy dictates that scope for positive disagreement and argument, based on mutual trust, confidence and reverse delegation are essential features of professional practice.

For further information on past, and future BELMAS annual conferences, please see [www.belmas.org.uk](http://www.belmas.org.uk) or follow [@BELMASoffice](https://twitter.com/BELMASoffice), the conference hashtag was #BELMAS2018, if you want to read the conference conversations. The next BELMAS 2019 annual conference will be held in the East Midlands on 12-14th July 2019. You can also read the BELMAS Blog pages here: <https://www.belmas.org.uk/BELMAS-Blog>.

# Time for a PIT stop: supporting teachers' reflection-in-action

## *A Practice Insight Working Paper by Russell Grigg and Helen Lewis*

During the football at the summer World Cup coaches took advantage of a break in action, initiated by the Video Assisted Referee System, to provide real-time advice to players on their performance. Teachers are benefiting from similar ideas through developments such as in-ear coaching (Scheeler et al., 2011) and post-lesson video stimulated reflected dialogue (Lewis, 2018). This paper explores an innovative model that brings together coaching, mentoring and reflective practice, and discusses the benefits and challenges of such an approach.

### **Theoretical basis**

Most models (including our own) that seek to support reflective practice draw heavily on the well-reported contributions of John Dewey and Donald Schön. In initial teacher education, the traditional model of reflection encourages trainee teachers to reflect on their actions, in post-lesson dialogue. Whilst there is clearly value in this approach, we suggest that subtle changes to practice during a lesson can reap rewards for both the trainee and the learners.

In particular we build on Dewey's (1933) view of reflection as active, persistent and enquiry-based, along with Schön's (1983, 1987) reflection-in-action. We have applied this complex notion (Munby, 1989) to mean teachers taking a momentary 'time out' from the midst of teaching by removing themselves from the action to reflect (Court, 1988).

The PIT stop model is also shaped by Ericsson's (1998) concept of deliberate practice, which highlights that professionals develop expertise through dedicated practice, acting on immediate feedback and self-reflection, guided by a qualified other. The model was borne from observing many trainee teachers who, in our view, could have seen improvement in their practice if they had initiated a small change. This is very much in line with Nudge theory (Thales and Sunstein, 2009) which posits that gains can be made through 'small nudges' such as responding to early and useful feedback and empowering people to make the choice themselves.



## Background

Discussions with teacher education colleagues confirmed that often when they observe trainee teachers they want to 'step in' and offer advice. Anecdotally, mentors report on occasions when trainees' progress could have been supported effectively by a small change, but they say that they usually wait until the post-lesson discussion to raise this. They are concerned that if they do say something 'in the moment' this might affect the teacher's confidence, disrupt the classroom dynamic and run against existing protocols and systems geared towards post-lesson reflection and evaluation against professional standards. Our model seeks to address these concerns by removing the grade assessment elements of the observation and re-orientating the conversation away from a mechanistic, tick-box and compliance view towards a more immediate and developmental turn. We would concur with Whiteside's (2017) view that the culture of performativity inhibits true coaching to take place. Rather, PIT stop seeks to develop a relationship between observer and observed based on mutual respect and a commitment to learn from each other where feedback becomes a two-way process.

## The model in outline

During a lesson, usually two PIT stops are called at agreed signals – one by the mentor and mentee. These PIT stops provide a short, dynamic on-the-spot dialogue which should be:

**P**recise – confined to specific issue(s). These are what Lofthouse (2017: 11) calls the 'critical moments' that may open up bigger conversations about teaching and learning or relationships between the individual, school and society.

**I**nsightful – where the feedback reflects the particular context of the mentee, the class and the school. The feedback focuses on what really matters at the time.

**T**imely – selecting an appropriate moment which least disrupts the lesson flow and which takes into account the psychodynamic/emotional aspects of teaching.

Clearly the quality of dialogue between the mentor and mentee is a significant factor in the success of the PIT stop model. It requires self-discipline from both parties to focus on the issue in hand and avoid the temptation of talking generally about 'the lesson'. Observers need to exercise social and emotional intelligence in choosing

their moment, and in making sure that the PIT stop only takes a minute. Table 1 highlights the difference between PIT stop

and more traditional observational practices.

Element	PIT Stop model	Traditional practice
Reflective practice	Reflection-in-action	Reflection-on-action
Timing	During lesson	After the lesson
Focus	What can I change now?	What can I change next time?
Duration	30-60 seconds	15-30 minutes
Agency	Observed and observed	Observer
Orientation	Developmental	Judgmental
Assessment	Formative (no grades)	Summative (grades)

Table 1. Characteristics of PIT Stop in comparison to other reflective practices

Elsewhere, we have discussed the largely positive initial findings of using the model with undergraduate and postgraduate trainee teachers (Grigg and Lewis, 2017). These are summarised in Table 2. Observers speak about feeling empowered and no longer being frustrated at having to report 'missed opportunities' at the end of the lesson. There are also

gains in terms of the mentors' own professional development. They need to be actively listening and observing throughout the session, and need to hone their feedback carefully. As one tutor put it, 'this has helped me reflect on how well I observe and communicate, rather than worry about writing something for every standard.'

Area	Gains
Teaching and Learning	<p>Immediate opportunity to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ correct errors and misconceptions in learners</li> <li>✓ offer support with behaviour management</li> <li>✓ offer advice regarding pace/ structure/ questioning etc</li> </ul>
Professional development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Teachers as well as mentors have ownership of the feedback and dialogue</li> <li>✓ Teachers have a strong say in their own development</li> </ul>
Coaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Personalised goal setting</li> <li>✓ Opportunity to apply theory-in-practice</li> </ul>
Mentoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Co-creating understanding</li> <li>✓ Mentors feel empowered and energised by the 'in the moment' context of feedback</li> </ul>

Table 2. Summary of gains associated with PIT stop model

Ultimately, what matters is the impact PIT stop has on pupils' learning. Many observers report changes for the better when using the approach – for example when teachers are directed to pupils' misconceptions or the need to clarify learning intentions.

### Challenges

Having observed the model in action, here we reflect more on the practical

challenges. Being observed can be a stressful business at any time. This can be accentuated by the thought of someone intervening while teaching. Feelings of anxiety can be shared by both mentor and mentee. Catherine, an experienced school mentor, acknowledged that she was 'very nervous and unsure when and what to say during the PIT stops'. Her energies focused more on the mechanics than observing what was actually happening around her. Another mentor worried that if

she gave advice that ‘made matters worse’ this would reflect on her more than the trainee.

The mentee needs to be in a receptive state to interpret the feedback and confident enough in her classroom management skills to briefly ‘step aside’ from the class to engage in a short conversation with a mentor. Several mentees have told us that they find it difficult to listen attentively to what an observer has to say because they are mindful that the class are working in the background. As Emma, a postgraduate trainee put it, ‘It was hard to concentrate during the discussion –and I was conscious of the children in the class and also of the time constraint of a minute or so.’ Information has to be processed quickly and decisively. Sarah found it difficult to explain what she wanted advice on when she called the PIT stop: ‘I had a vague idea but I could not get my words out.’

There are conceptual as well as practical challenges. There is something to be said

for the view that reflection needs distance from the experience to make meaning, rather like stepping away from a painting to see the full picture. Our model offers no time or opportunity to slowly deconstruct practice, as would be the case in post-lesson reflection. Hayley, a university tutor, welcomed the immediacy of the model but wondered whether ‘a weaker trainee may not understand the advice or be able to reflect on the spot’. However, the thought to hold on to is that PIT stop is a *supplement* rather than substitute for post-lesson reflection.

## Conclusion

PIT stop is still in its early days and we would be delighted to hear from readers interested in working with us to develop the model. Although there are challenges to address, based on the feedback received and our own observations we maintain that the model offers a relevant, meaningful and genuinely formative means of professional development in teacher education.

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# Book Review of

## **The Leader's Guide to Coaching in Schools**

by John Campbell and Christian van Nieuwerburgh

**Reviewed by Mark Liddell**

**“Our aim is to provide educational leaders with information and insights that can support them as they introduce or embed coaching practices and cultures within their educational institutions.”**

Educational leaders live and breathe complexity. In the midst of debates focused on standardised testing, teacher quality, student wellbeing and curriculum developments, leaders are tasked with the need to drive school-wide change agendas. van Nieuwerburgh and Campbell, in their 2017 book, ‘The Leader's Guide to Coaching in Schools’, provide research-informed and evidence-based frameworks for coaching in schools so that school leaders and teachers can create sustainable outcomes in their schools and meet the complex needs of students.

The book begins by giving helpful definitions for coaching in education and leadership coaching within schools so that the reader can understand the elements of successful coaching practise.

Consideration is also given for the role of the school leader and the way that they

can model coaching techniques with their daily conversations and interactions. Not only is each chapter littered with references to current research, there are also practical tips, questions, practice conversations, protocols and case studies which detail the implementation of specific coaching skills.

Campbell and van Nieuwerburgh are writing for educational leaders who acknowledge the power of coaching within education and wish to establish a school culture which allows staff to see the benefit of humility, self-awareness, and goal setting which provides the foundation for professional growth. Given the impact that coaching can have on the performance and wellbeing of staff it isn't surprising to see the ways that educational leaders are voraciously reading this research are seeking out ways to apply the frameworks for their contexts.

The strength of this book lies in the practical frameworks that are proposed. The reader can see a clear starting point for the skills that need to be developed in order to implement a variety of individual and school wide coaching conversations.

There are numerous ways to respond to the research because alongside the QR code videos resources, each chapter concludes with steps to explore, starter questions and a reference list. van Nieuwerburgh's, 'An Introduction to Coaching Skills: A Practical Guide', is a good place to start for readers who wish to

understand core coaching skills and competencies while 'The Leader's Guide to Coaching in Schools' provides extensive detail for the educational context. I thoroughly recommend this book and look forward to seeing the impact that it will have.

# CollectivED Thinking Out Loud

## *An interview with Sarah Jones*

**Please tell us who you are and what your current role in education is.**

I have just left a role as Head Teacher of a nursery, primary and secondary school for only 75 pupils on a remote Scottish island. Next week I start as an Executive Vice Principal for Springwell in South Lincolnshire, where I will be helping open two new Alternative Provision schools for the area. (This sounds like a strange move, but my new role is far closer to the work I did for ten years in London before moving to Scotland, and I'm incredibly excited about getting back into it.)

**Please reflect on an episode or period in your career during which your own learning helped you to develop educational practices which remain with you today. What was the context, how were you learning, and what was the impact?**

While working in an inner-city London Sixth Form College I did a project on raising attendance as part of my NPQH. I couldn't find much research on attendance in sixth form, but I read what I could. I also read some stuff on behaviourism and

nudge economics. I spoke to people in local sixth forms with better attendance than us. I got my team together and developed a pretty unoriginal system: praise and reward for those who attend, attempts to help those whose complex lives made attendance difficult, and inescapable sanctions for those who missed classes. With such poor attendance, following up on absences was a Herculean task. My team of "student achievement officers" (non-classroom based TAs, all very young and very wonderful) called hundreds of kids each and every morning, found out from teachers what work had been missed, and hunted kids down at the end of each day to make them stay behind and complete all their missed work. Attendance started to raise, and we all thought it was due to the inescapable nature of this after-school sanction. But most kids soon found beautifully creative ways to escape the inescapable, and yet attendance continued to improve. The essay I wrote at the time for the NPQH admitted that I was relatively baffled by this, and put it down to the quality of the support we tried to put in place – helping kids who looked after younger siblings before school get them into breakfast clubs, giving grants so they



could take the train instead of the bus, etc. Now, several years later, I have thought more widely and deeply about some of the issues with behaviourism, and behaviour systems built on praise and sanctions. I now think the continued improvement we saw was probably also down to the relationships those young members of staff built with the kids. Looking back over my student feedback, I can see hints towards this – comments about how valued or cared for they felt when the SAOs bother to call them, or get their missed work, or help them get things done in time. I missed this whole element then, but I now see it as a fundamental part of a career-long piece of learning about the importance of relationships, and of the things that can happen [only?] when young people feel cared for.

**When you work with colleagues or other professionals to support their development what are the key attributes that you bring with you, and what difference do these qualities make?**

Teachers need more autonomy in regard to their development. When we teach we rely on a hundred thousand habits, and changing even one of them is incredibly difficult. If a person doesn't want to change something, very little is going to

make them change it when left alone in their classroom. I love working with a colleague on something they are genuinely interested in, and excited by. I get excited too, and it becomes a shared endeavour.

**When someone you meet tells you they are thinking about becoming a teacher what advice do you give them?**

Do it! It's the best job in the world. Young people are fun, and funny, and intelligent, and caring, and capable of surprising you with how wonderful they are every day, if you want to see it.

**If you could change one thing which might enable more teachers to work and learn collaboratively in the future what would you do?**

Get rid of PRP. Quite how anyone is supposed to properly experiment when a failure will affect their pay and progression, I don't know.

(I know that's not technically just about collaboration. But it would be an important first step towards meaningful teacher learning of any kind!)

**If you could turn back the clock and bring back a past educational practice or policy what would it be and why?**

Maybe bring back proper Citizenship Education? I trained as a Citizenship teacher in 2005, so of course I would think it was a great subject. But why on earth would you not want children to learn politics and sociology from an early age? Citizenship education helps children look critically at the world we live in, and helps them develop informed opinions about the stuff that's going on in the world. At it's best, it also shows them that they are able to have an impact on at least some of this stuff. I think the world needs quite a lot more of this at the moment.

Or maybe bring back some sort of pre-Ofsted days. I don't know enough educational history to comment on this with any degree of intelligence, but if there

was a time when schools weren't off-rolling thousands of kids to protect their ability to put up an "Outstanding" banner outside their gates, I might want to go back to that.

**What is the best advice or support you have been given in your career? Who offered it and why did it matter?**

Though it's appallingly cheesy, the best support I have been given in my career is from my partner (who is also a teacher). He is the stay at home parent, which means I can continue to work in school leadership. He gives incredibly sensible advice when I'm being an idiot. And he occasionally tells me that I'm good at my job, which means something because I was once his boss, and I know he really dislikes having bosses at all.

## Thank you to our wonderful fifth issue contributors

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